

Elliot was a child with a lot of energy.



Perhaps too much energy.



Like, "oh my goodness, we're exhausted, and we don't want you to break anything, please stop running around" energy.



One day in early elementary school, a boy named Tony tried to push Elliot around.



Elliot, however, interpreted this, and the resulting fight, as play.



He'd made a new friend!

At first baffled, Tony eventually decided physical challenges with Elliot were fun, and roughhousing after that really was friendly.



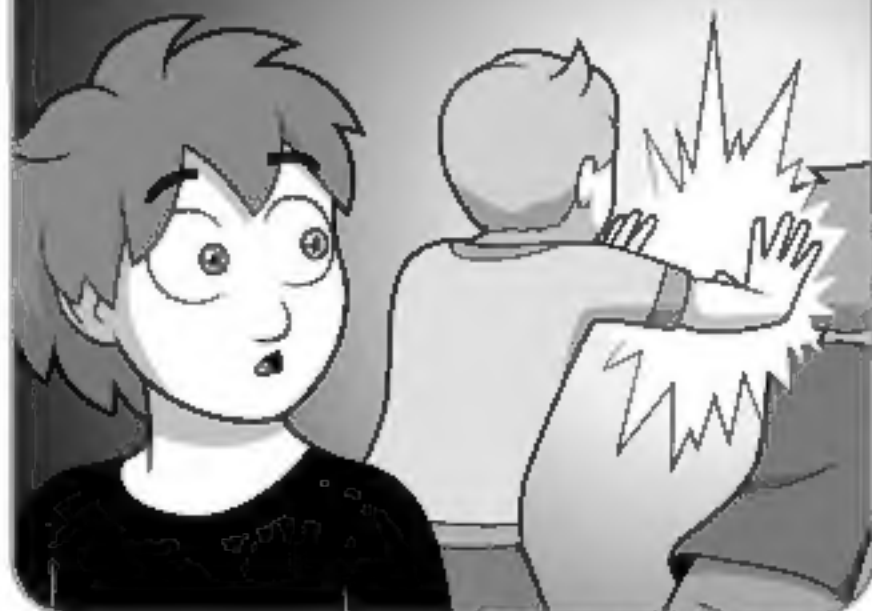
Relentlessly discouraged by adults, but friendly.

Elliot's parents were quick to warn Elliot that someone could get hurt, and that most people didn't want to "play" that way.



But Elliot knew he and Tony were just having fun. He didn't see the big deal.

Some time later, however, Elliot noticed Tony was pushing around people who didn't want to play.



Tony said the other kids were laughing at them. They said Elliot and Tony were boyfriends, and that they liked to kiss when they wrestled.

Elliot didn't get why that was bad, or how that made it okay to push them.



Tony didn't want to play after that. He was quick to anger, and pushed anyone that got on his nerves.

Elliot wanted Tony to stop, but Tony was the first friend he'd ever had after Sarah. He didn't know what to do.



Then Elliot saw Tony shove a girl.



When Elliot hit Tony, it was not playful.

He also called Tony a bad word, which got him a detention.



Any chance of Tony and Elliot making up were clobbered on that day.

Instead, Tedd and Elliot slowly became friends, and Tedd eventually told Elliot he was a boy.



After serious- punching Tony, Elliot became "that scary kid who fights bullies".

The bully of bullies.



Any violent bully he saw would have to answer to him.

Eventually, Elliot had no doubts about winning. Bullies had no chance against him.

He had all the power.



When he saw violent bullies, it enraged him.

By the time he attacked, however...

...He was smiling.



Elliot had never been very introspective. He thought something was right to do, and he did it.

He even used martial arts training to keep from doing too much harm to the bullies.

He was clearly the good guy.

THAT GUY'S SCARY

YEAH



One day, however, Elliot was just thinking about fighting bullies, and he saw the face he made.

He saw a bad guy.



He realized he enjoyed the power he had, and looked forward to having an excuse to use it.

Elliot was more reserved after that. He tried to do only the minimum necessary to get bullies to back off, most often just intimidating them.



This did not mean Elliot didn't want to take it further. Bullies angered him greatly, and he liked the thought of making them feel weak.



Knowing this about himself is why Elliot didn't like getting introspective.

He felt he had an important reason to do so, however, after learning there might be a way to power up Cheerleadra during an emergency.



THAT'S THE TRADE THAT WOULD MAKE ME A VILLAIN.

YOU SAY SOMETHING?

...NAH.





Thursday



YOU WERE GOING TO HAVE A MEETING WITH THOSE GRIFFINS ABOUT THE MAGIC BUILDUP THAT AFFECTS BOTH VERSIONS OF OUR WORLD...

AND YOU WEREN'T GOING TO INVITE *ME*?!

DOES HE JUST FEEL LEFT OUT?!

AS IT HAPPENS, I DO HAVE NEW INFORMATION REGARDING THE BUILDUP OF MAGIC ENERGY IN MOPERVILLE, AND THE CLOG THAT'S CAUSING IT.

YOU DO? BUT I'VE BEEN ASKING ABOUT THAT!

SO YOU COULD TELL ELLIOT?

NOT JUST FOR THAT!

THIS IS ME WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.

I'VE ONLY JUST RECENTLY BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM IT.

THEN MAGIC DECIDED IT WASN'T DONE "NOT-CHANGING", AND I HAD TO SEE IF *THAT* CHANGED ANYTHING RELEVANT.

IT DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE.

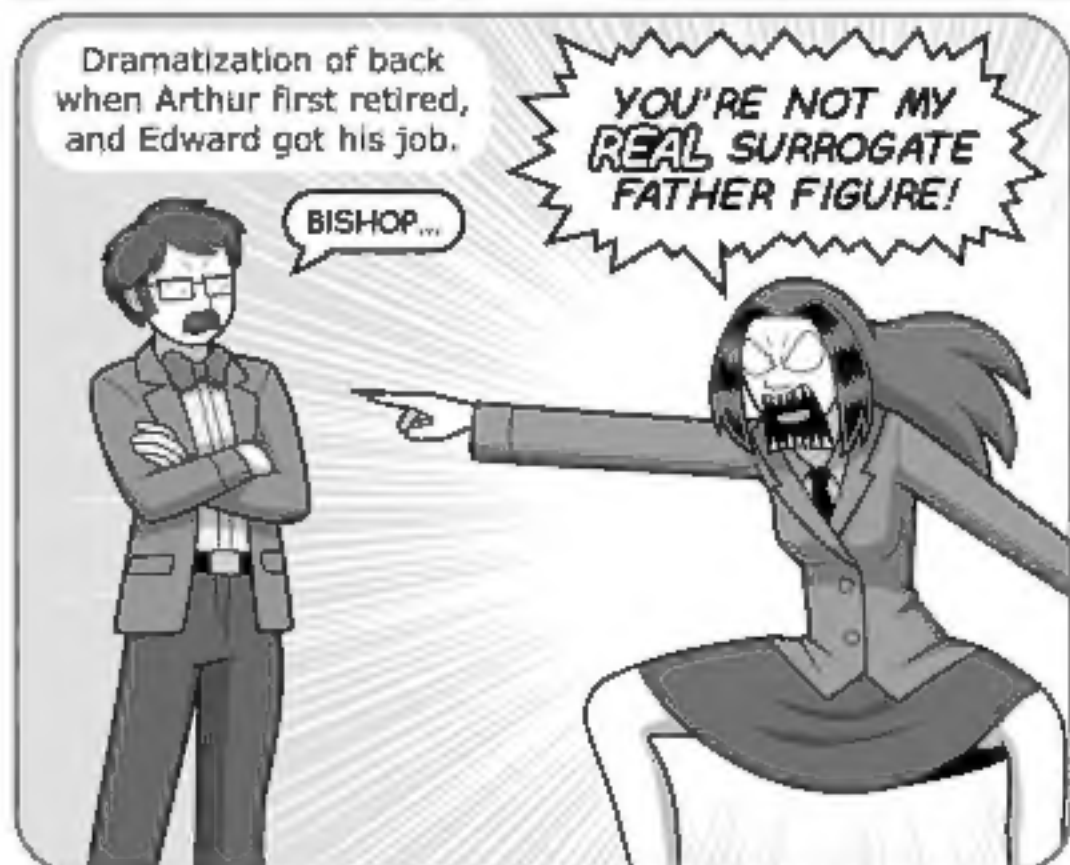
SO WHAT DID YOU FIND OUT?

I'M KEEPING *THAT* TO MYSELF UNTIL THE GRIFFIN MEETING.

I DON'T WANT *THIS ONE* GETTING IDEAS ABOUT HEROICALLY GOING THERE *ALONE*.

ARE YOU KIDDING? MY SUPER HERO SPELL'S NERFED, AND I'VE SEEN GRIFFINS INTIMIDATE AN IMMORTAL, AND TAKE DOWN A SPIDER-VAMPIRE MAN!

YOU GOT ANYONE ELSE WHO'S EXTRA STRONG AND DIPLOMATIC WE CAN BRING WITH US???







LOOK, TEDD'S RIGHT  
THAT WE SHOULDN'T  
BE WORRIED...



BUT *ELLIOT*'S RIGHT THAT  
WE SHOULD BE PREPARED  
JUST IN CASE SOMETHING  
UNEXPECTED HAPPENS...



AND *EDWARD*'S RIGHT THAT  
THERE SHOULD BE A THIRD  
PERSON THAT THE GRIFFINS  
SHOULD GET ALONG WITH.



AND THAT  
PERSON  
SHOULD BE  
*ME*.

I'M NON-THREATENING, FLY.  
CAN PROTECT ALL OF US WITH  
TELEKINESIS, AND AM, ACCORDING  
TO SEVERAL RELIABLE SOURCES,  
"RIDICULOUSLY POWERFUL".



PLUS, I BET THE  
SCIENCE-GRIFFIN  
WILL FIND ME  
INTERESTING.

I AM A  
SUPER-  
POWERED  
TALKING POINT,  
AND I CAN  
HELP.



ALSO, IF  
YOU TRY TO  
GO WITH-  
OUT ME,  
I'M JUST  
GONNA  
FOLLOW  
YOU.

I CAN  
DO THAT.

BECAUSE  
FLYING.







And so, the "Have a Nice, Friendly Chat With a Couple of Lovely Griffins" party was decided.

**Elliot, the Default**



The person the griffins expect to be there (and, when part cell phone, has the coordinates of where to go in the middle of an unkempt forest in his head).

**Edward, the Professor**



An older, experienced person wearing glasses who claims to have new information about the clog in the flow of shared magic between worlds that are one world.

**Grace, the Squirrel Lion**



An adorable powerhouse, the griffins will be able to sense her strength, and might see her as royalty. Andrea the griffin might also nerd out over her.

Though the griffins Tara and Andrea were expected to be friendly, lovely, and worthy of their own romcom sitcom, certain dangerous possibilities existed (especially after four weeks).

Edward had an extensive list of expected unexpected things that would complicate, or cancel, the meeting.



THE GRIFFINS ARE GIVEN NEW INSTRUCTIONS BY SOMEONE, SUCH AS FROM A KING...

THE GRIFFINS BRING A JERK COLLEAGUE WITH THEM...

SOMEONE ELSE ENTIRELY SHOWS UP INSTEAD OF THEM...

THE GRIFFINS ARE FRENZIED BY STRANGE MUSHROOMS...

Given how quickly Grace could transform, and not wanting to appear threatening (or start Bigfoot rumors if someone saw her), it was decided that she would begin the meeting in her default human form, though with her antennae out for elevated senses.



WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT MY FEET?

THEY'RE NOT THAT BIG.

Elliot's Cheerleadra form would be optimized for defense, awareness, and getting away quickly.

The maximum he could put in any stat was three, and he would get two extra points by shrinking a bit.

Charm was ignored, as one would just be normal Elliot-level social skills, and they weren't THAT worried about Elliot saying something that would end in disaster.

Tech was given a point so Elliot could gain access to "cell phone powers" while transformed.

Charm	1
Awareness	3
Tech	2
Strength	1
Flight	3
Endurance	3
Resistance	3
Total	16/14

I CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE THERE'S AT LEAST *SOME* WORRY ABOUT ME SAYING SOMETHING THAT COULD END IN DISASTER.



DON'T FEEL BAD. I WORRY ABOUT THAT WITH EVERYONE.

Ashley was a normal girl from California who moved to Moperville



Then she was kidnapped by her magic boy friend, who had been possessed by another him, and his magically created twin sister who had been possessed by a vampire

This was less normal



Exposed to ancient magic within a secret government facility, magic potential awakened within Ashley, making her a wizard



Specifically magic "potential" She was literally no more powerful than before, and was a wizard only in an extremely technical sense



Fortunately for her, she fits in magic had also turned a magic training wand that had never worked before into a working magic training wand!



His name was Kevin

After weeks of putting it off (due to being kidnapped being quite upsetting, actually), Ashley's first training session with Kevin at Tedd's house was the morning of the same day as the evening meeting with the griffins.



Also, Sarah was there



Sarah thinks magic wands are cool.





ANOTHER PERSON? YOU'RE NOT  
A WIZARD. AND YOU ALREADY  
HAVE DECENT  
MAGIC!

I'M ELLIOT,  
ASHLEY'S  
BOYFRIEND.

**IGNORED!**

EH?

**LISTEN UP!**

MITTENS IS THE ONLY  
PROPER STUDENT HERE,  
AND SHE WILL GET ALL  
OF MY ATTENTION!

ALSO SARAH, BECAUSE  
FLATTERY WILL GET YOU  
EVERYWHERE

EH?

**BUT MOSTLY  
MITTENS!**

FOR I AM BUT  
ONE WAND, AND  
NEEDED FOR  
THE STRENGTH  
TRAINING!

SARAH CAN  
STRENGTH TRAIN ON  
MITTENS' BREAKS.

THE REST OF  
YOU CAN LISTEN  
TO LESSONS,  
I GUESS.

IF YOU REALLY  
HAVE NOTHING  
BETTER TO DO

STRENGTH  
TRAINING?!

OH YES! IT'S VERY SIMPLE!

I AM A WAND  
WITH SPELLS  
YOU CAN USE,  
BUT! I DON'T  
HELP WITH  
ANY OF MY  
OWN POWER  
WHEN YOU  
CAST THEM!

I ALSO  
BLOCK  
AMBIENT  
MAGIC FROM  
HELPING  
YOU CAST  
THEM!

**THERE-  
FORE!**

ONE HUNDRED  
PERCENT OF THE  
MAGIC USED TO  
CAST SPELLS WITH  
ME MUST COME  
FROM YOU, THE  
STUDENT!

THIS MAKES IT  
POSSIBLE FOR  
SOMEONE WITH  
NO SPELLS TO  
REALLY TRAIN  
THEIR MAGIC  
POWER!

OF COURSE! MAKE CERTAIN ALL THE POWER COMES FROM THE USER. INCLUDE SPELLS THAT REQUIRE A RANGE OF POWER. AND BAM! TRAINING WAND!

HEY!  
GRADUATES  
SHOULDN'T  
INTERRUPT!

SORRY BUT I  
JUST LEARNED  
HOW TO MAKE  
TRAINING WANDS!

I'LL HAVE TO SORT  
OUT BLOCKING AMBIENT  
MAGIC, BUT STILL!

FOR NOW, YOU COULD  
JUST HAVE ME EAT IT

YOU PLOT TO  
REPLACE ME?!  
FIEND! DEVIL!  
BEELZEBUB!

WHAT? I  
DON'T WANT  
TO MAKE A  
TALKING WAND  
LIKE YOU.

O-OF COURSE! THE  
MAJESTY OF KEVIN  
IS BEYOND YOU!

RIGHT

SO WHAT  
KIND OF SPELLS  
DO WE START  
WITH?

I HAVE  
MANY  
AMAZING  
SPELLS!

JUST SOMETHING WITH  
PRACTICE SPELLS.

BUT AT  
YOUR  
LEVEL...

Soon

ONE MORE!

YOU CAN DO IT!

DING

VERY  
GOOD!

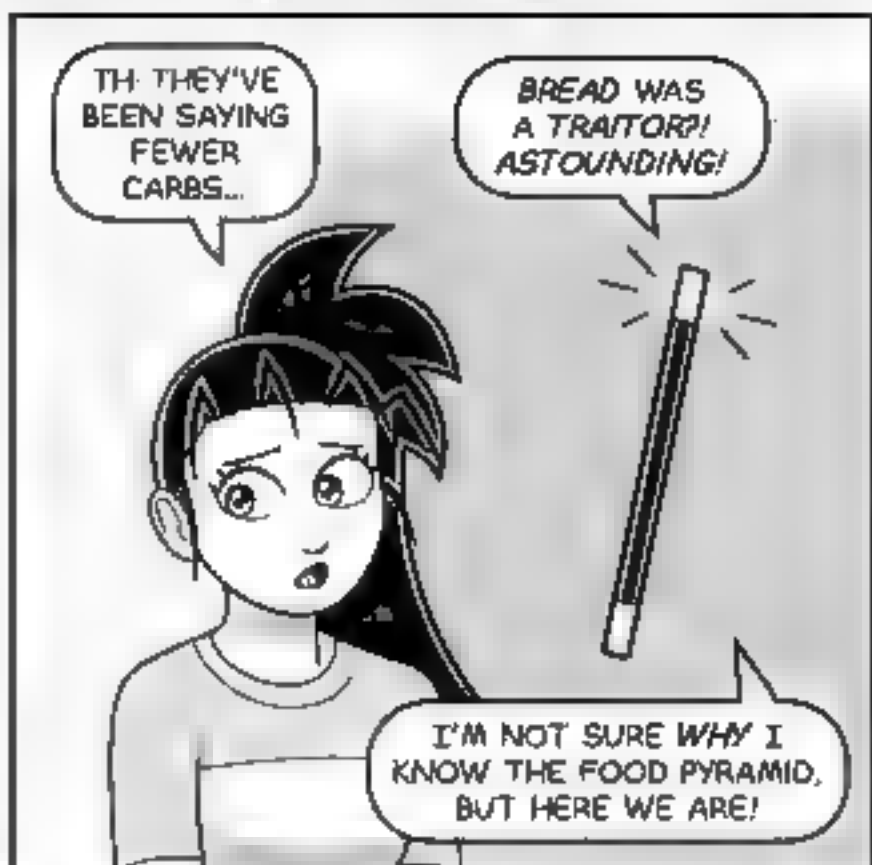
THIS IS SO  
NOT SWORD IN  
THE STONE..

OF COURSE NOT

I'M A WAND.



After a few sets of reps of making a wand glow...





DON'T MIND ME.

I JUST NEED TO MOVE SOME LAUNDRY ON THE OTHER SIDE AROUND.



BUT SEEING HOW I'M DOWN HERE HOW'S EVERYTHING GOING? HAS ANYTHING BEEN DESTROYED?

THEY'RE ALREADY DONE

REALLY? I SUPPOSE THAT DOES MAKE SENSE FOR A FIRST LESSON.



IT WAS SURPRISINGLY TIRING FOR HOW MUNDANE IT WAS.



THIS EARLY ON, TIRED IS GOOD. MUNDANE IS GOOD. YOU'LL BE DOING STUFF THAT MAKES ME GLAD IT'S NOT MY JOB TO COVER THIS STUFF UP ANYMORE IN NO TIME.

THANKS?



GRACE? ELLIOT? HOW ARE YOU TWO DOING?

STILL FEEL GOOD ABOUT LATER TODAY?



YEAH. GREAT



FANTASTIC!



YOU ACTUALLY MEANT THAT, WHICH MEANS YOU'RE WAY TOO HAPPY ABOUT TALKING WITH GRIFFINS.







SO YOU'RE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT TALKING TO THE GRIFFINS, HUH?

I'M NOT IT'S FINE, THERE'S NO REASON TO THINK THERE'LL BE ANY TROUBLE



IT'S JUST, IF THERE IS TROUBLE GRIFFINS ARE *REALLY* STRONG I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO FIGHT *MAGIC FLYING CAT-BIRDS*, AND THE CURRENT AGREED UPON EMERGENCY STRATEGY IS "RUN AWAY", SO, Y'KNOW

CONCERNS.



OH... OKAY I GET IT



YOU'RE SCARED OF THEM.



WHAT?! I'M NOT SCARED OF THEM!

THEY'RE NICE FRIENDLY BIRD-CAT-PEOPLE!

I JUST HAVE CONCERNS!



ELLIOT, ONE OF THEM *ATTACKED* YOU, AND YOU *JUST SAID* YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO FIGHT THEM.

YOU'RE USED TO LOOKING UP AT GUYS *TWICE* YOUR SIZE AND *KNOWING* YOU COULD TAKE THEM IN A FIGHT

OF *COURSE* THE GRIFFINS ARE SCARY

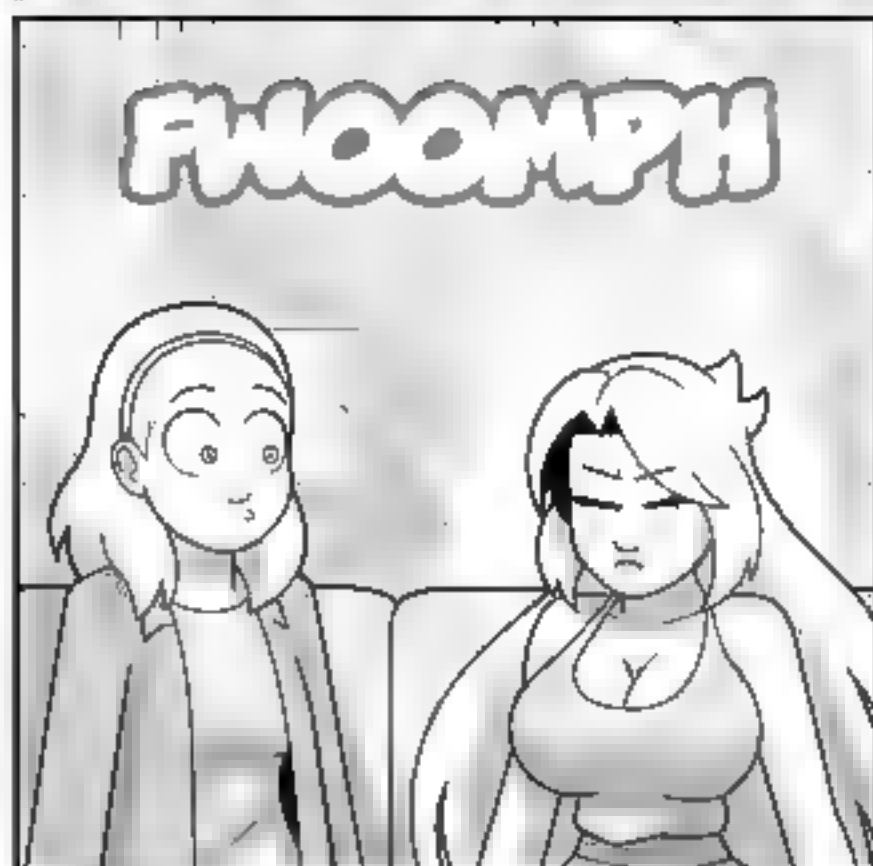
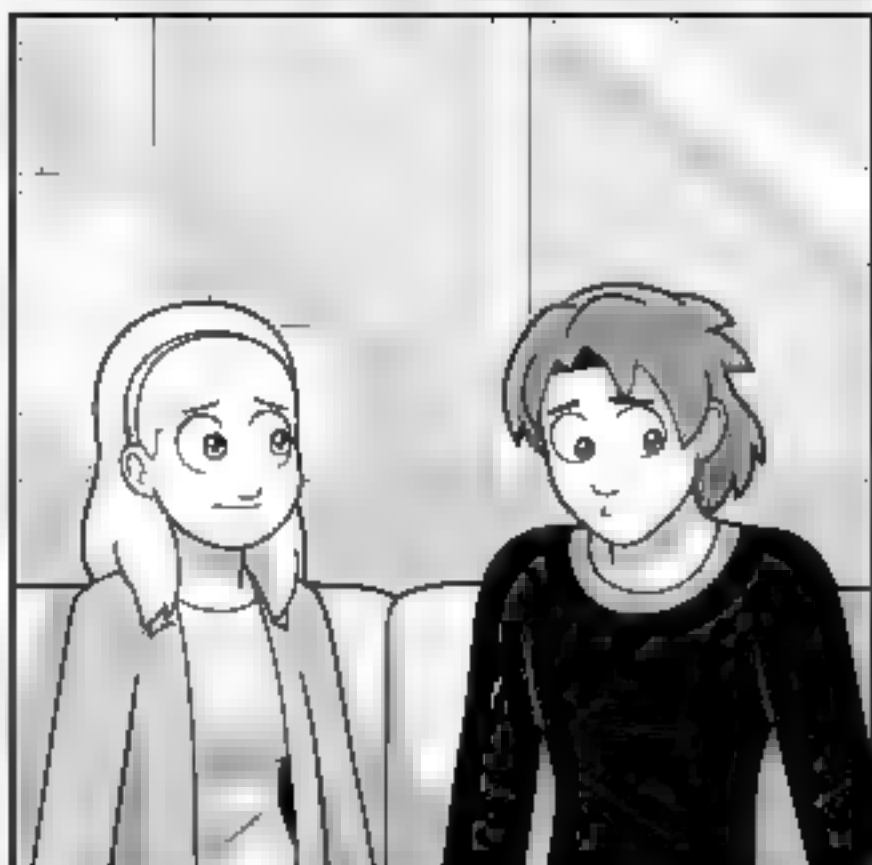


BUT LIKE TARA WAS *TRICKED* INTO ATTACKING ME AND I MEAN.

THEY'RE *NICE*

YEAH, WELL, SO ARE YOU, AND YOU CAN BE PRETTY SCARY







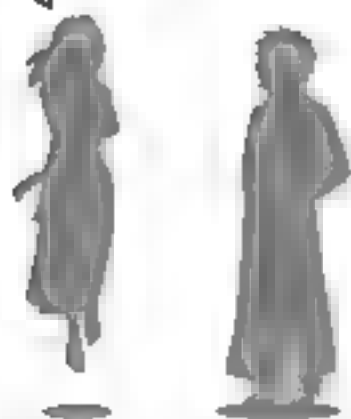
The far corner of the other side of the basement.



End Part 6

Part 7 Begins Wednesday, March 9th

I'M NOT SURE "CELL-PHONE POWERS" WERE THE RIGHT CHOICE



TRANSFORMING WITH YOUR PHONE ON YOU MADE IT EASY TO USE GPS, TEXT WITHOUT USING YOUR HANDS. NOT GET LOST IF YOU NEED TO FLY AWAY. INFINITE BATTERY...

BUT IT KEEPS ME FROM USING OTHER SPELLS WITH THIS FORM.

I CAN'T BE "CATLEADRA", OR USE MY VISION SPELL.

VISION SPELL?

IT CAN HIGHLIGHT AND LABEL STUFF FOR ME, LIKE GRIFFINS.

PRETTY SURE IT CAN DO MORE THAN THAT, BUT YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WITH SPELL DESCRIPTIONS.

WENT STRAIGHT FROM TOO MUCH TO TOO LITTLE

the use in the paragraph B. the energy usage of this spell is directly proportional to that of the cerebral energy of the celestial wisdom. (Paraphrase)

This spell does a thing Whatever

I WISH YOU'D MENTIONED IT SOONER. I COULD HAVE TRIED LEARNING IT FROM YOU

OH. SORRY...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. ODDS ARE GOOD THAT WE'RE BOTH ABOUT TO LOOK SILLY FOR WORRYING SO MUCH.

HELL, IF YOU KIDS WEREN'T WITH ME THIS WOULD JUST BE ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE

HE'D FEEL BETTER IF I WASN'T USELESS.

IN ANY CASE, DON'T YOU HAVE A TALENT FOR SENSING POWER?

EH... I DO, BUT IT'S NOT RELIABLE

IT JUST SORT OF KICKS IN, AND I'VE MISSED THINGS.

BEFORE...

BUT NOT WITH AN AWARENESS OF THREE, IT WOULD SEEM.

THE GRIFFINS?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS. IT'S JUST LIKE THERE'S A BIG SOMETHING WAY OVER THERE?

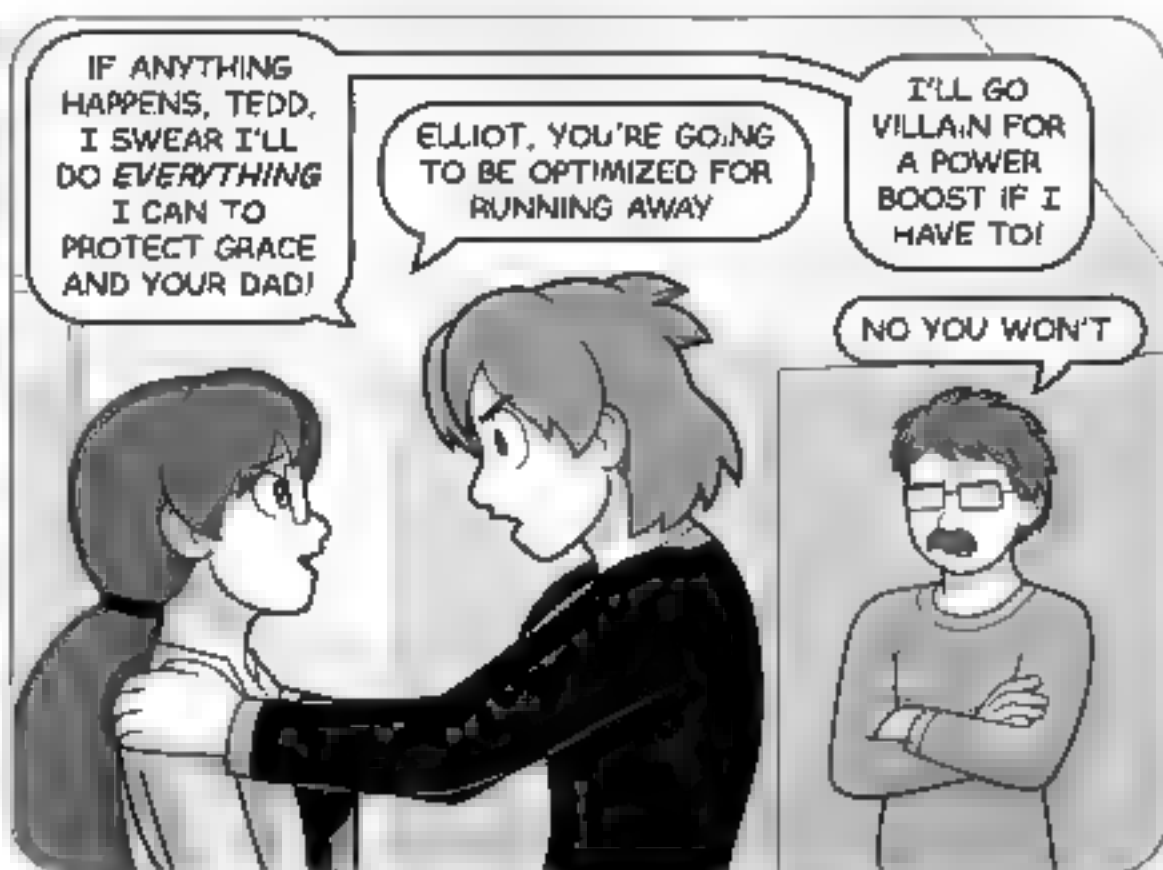
AND IT'S LIKE... A PULSE OF DANGER?

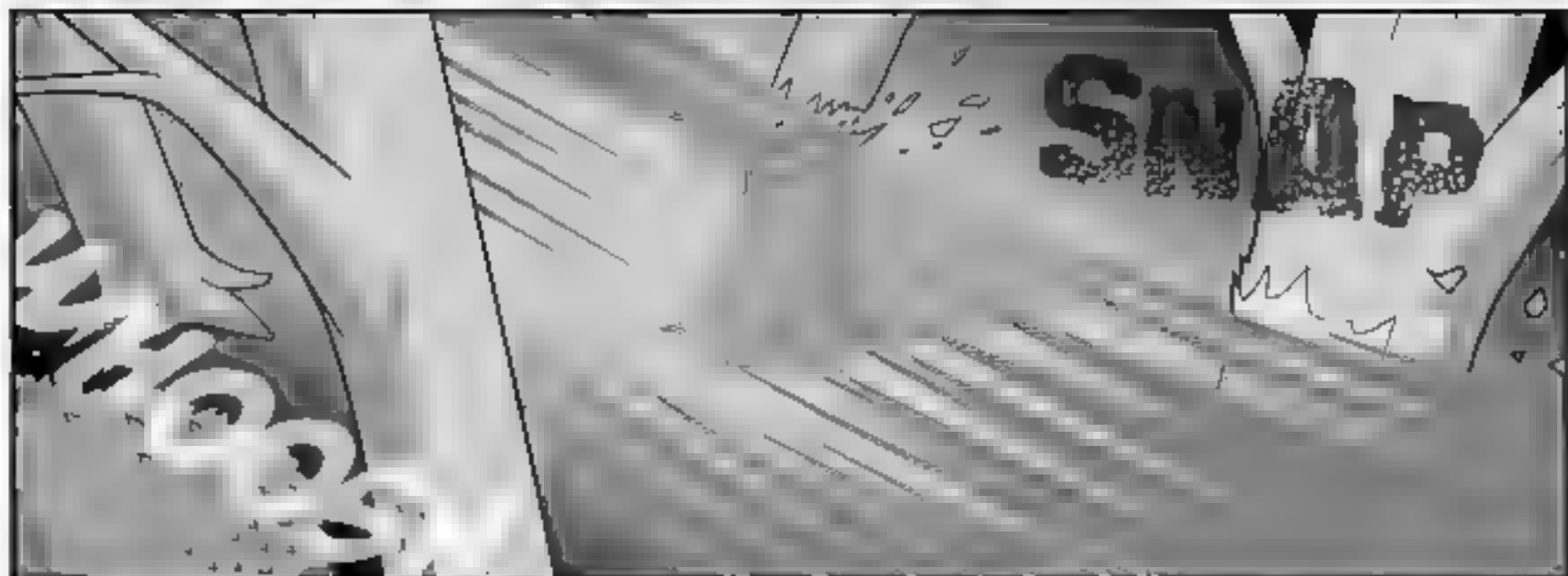
A PULSE?

I DUNNO. LIKE, STEADY FLASHES OF AGGRESSION?

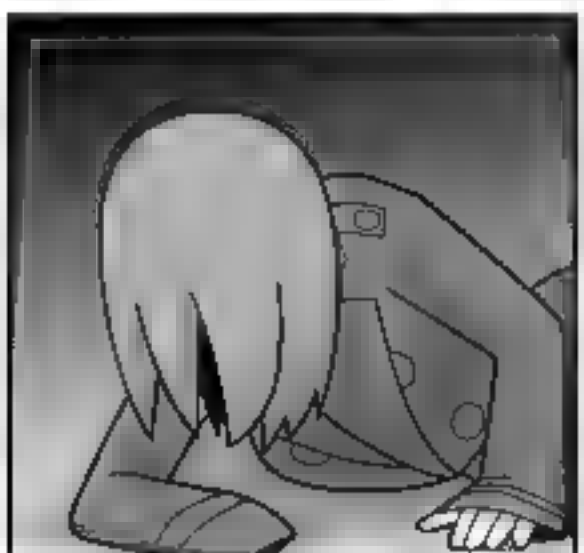
LIKE SOMEONE CAN'T DECIDE IF THEY'RE TICKED OR NOT?

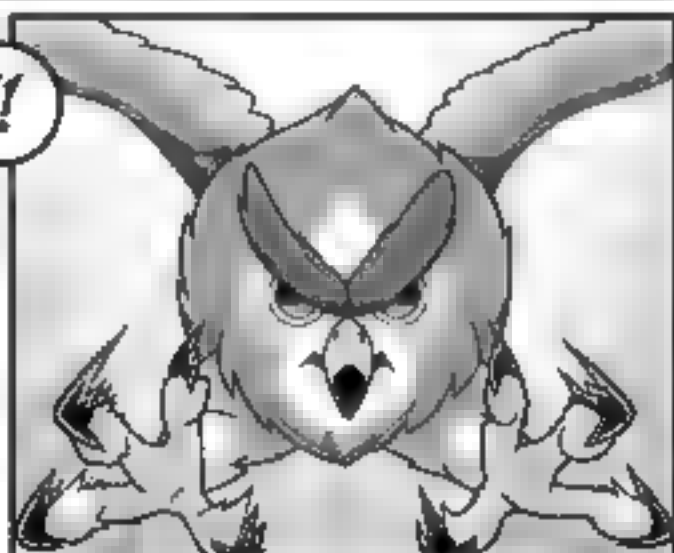
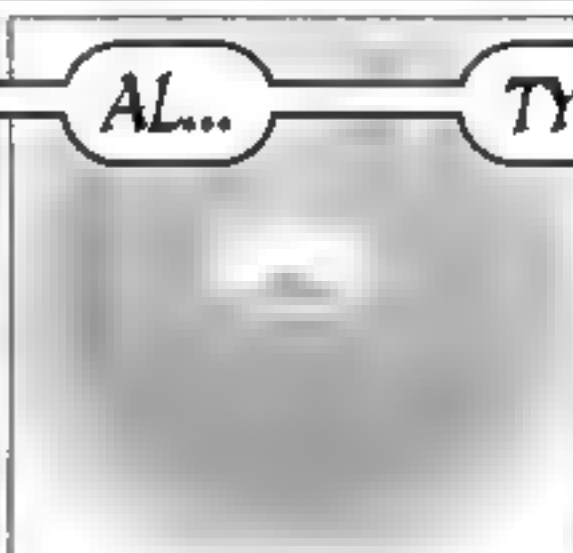
ASSUME TICKED.









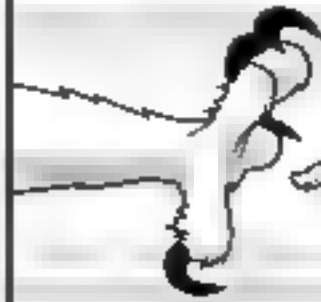




Charm	1	Flight	3
Awareness	3	Endurance	3
Tech	2	Resistance	3
Strength	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>16/14</b>



WHAT YOU NEED TO REALIZE IS THAT THERE ARE NO POINTS.



ELLIOT NEEDS A WAY TO IMAGINE WHAT HE WANTS.

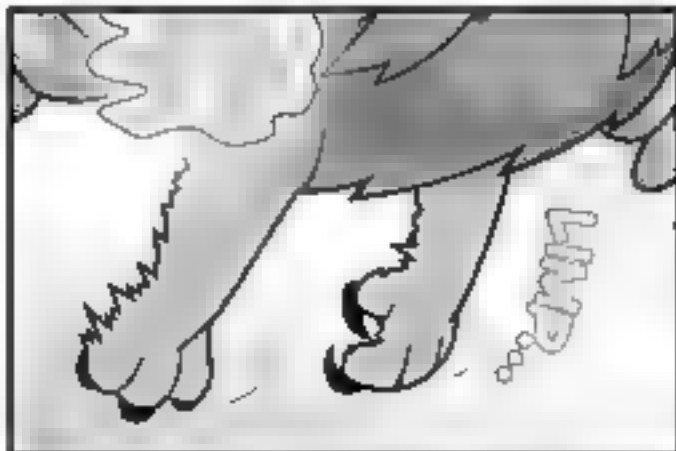
POINTS HELP WITH THAT.

THEY ALSO GIVE A CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT HE CAN SAFELY HANDLE.

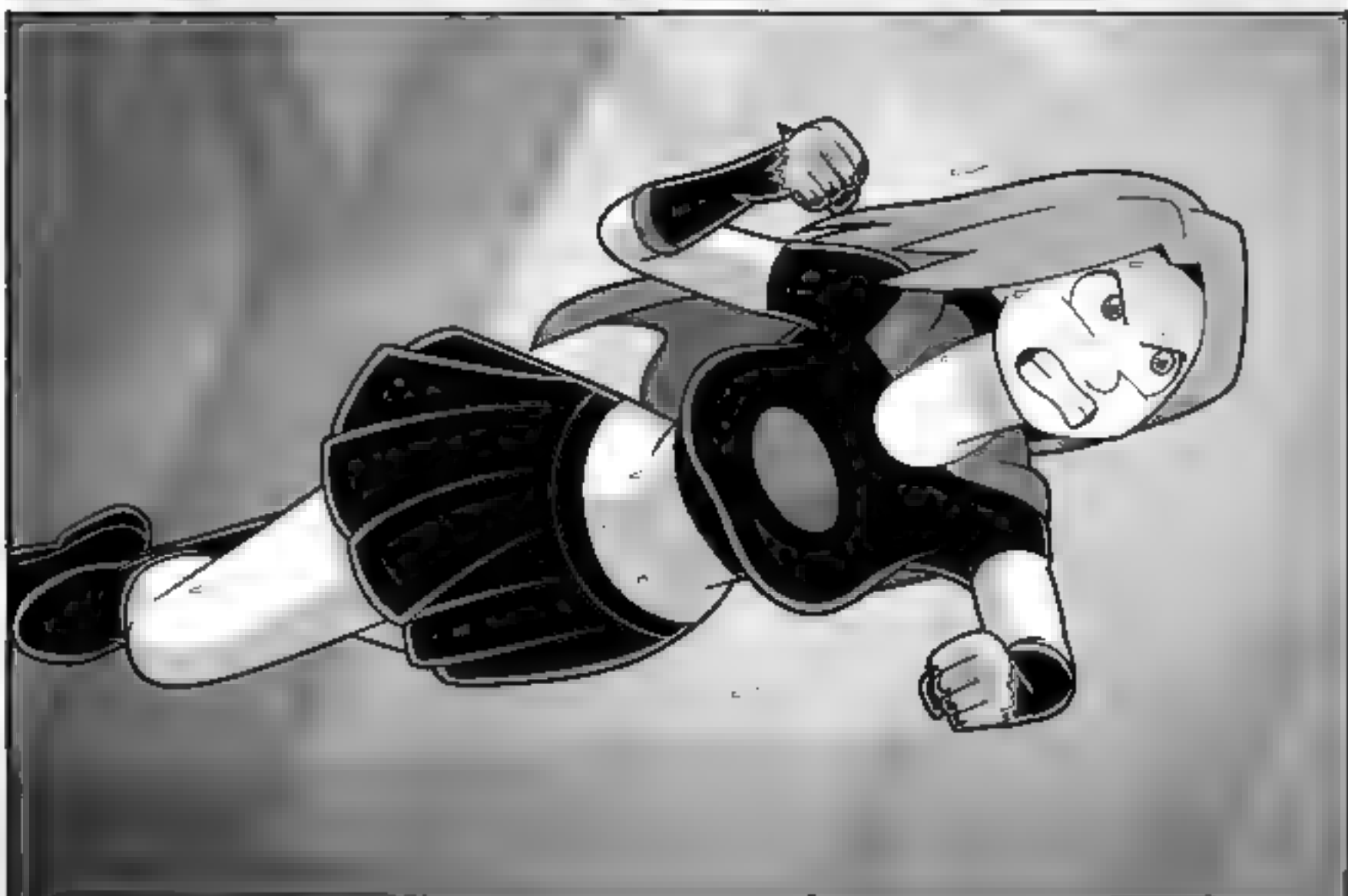
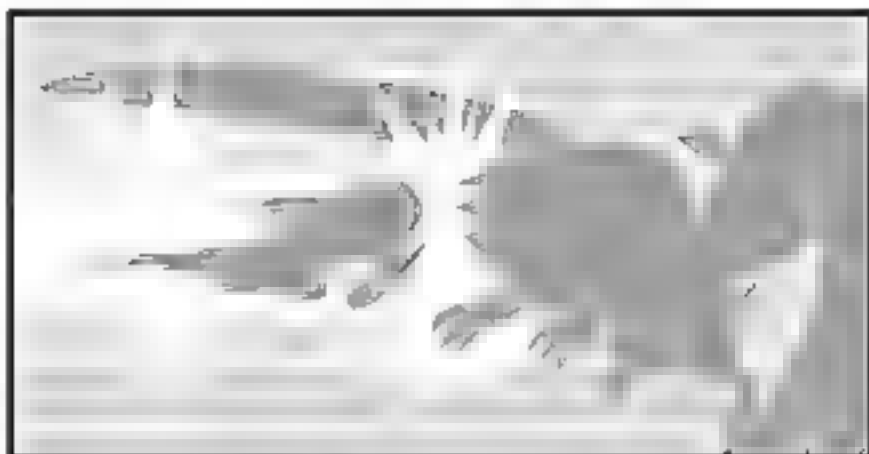
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ME BEING A HERO OR A VILLAIN..

IS RESTRAINT









Charm	1
Awareness	5
Tech	2
Strength	5

Flight	5
Endurance	3
Resistance	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>24/14</b>

DO I SET  
EDWARD  
DOWN AND  
GO AFTER  
THEM?

I DON'T WANT  
TO JUST LEAVE  
HIM SOMEWHERE  
ALONE WHERE IT'D  
BE HARD TO FIND  
HIM AGAIN...

BUT TAKING HIM BACK  
TOWARDS DEX SEEMS  
LIKE A TERRIBLE---

WAIT DEX?

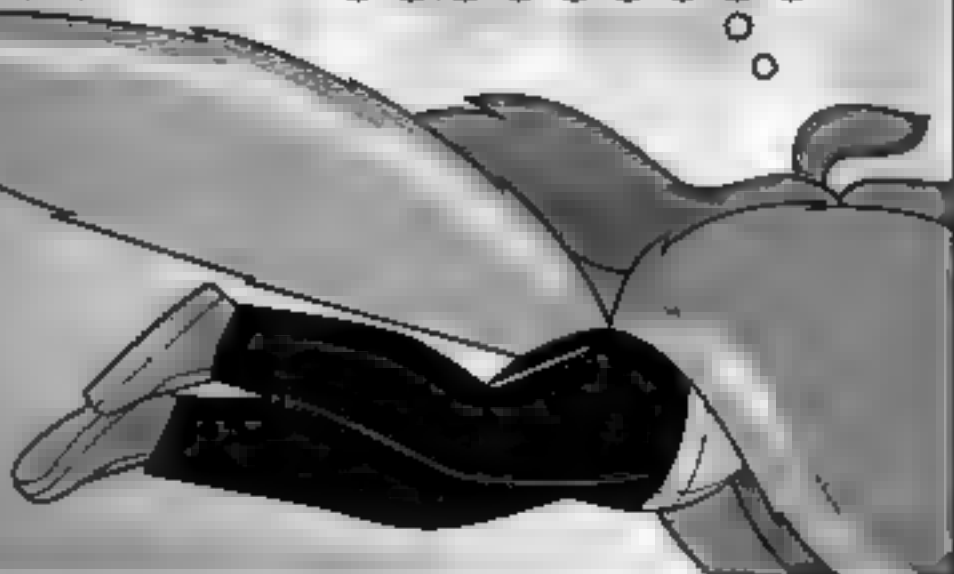
WHY DID I JUST CALL THE GRIFFIN.



OH NO

THAT'S WHY HIS  
VIBE'S FAMILIAR!

HE REMINDS ME OF DEX WHEN  
HE WAS BEING MANIPULATED!



THAT GRIFFIN'S BEING CONTROLLED!







GRIFFIN'S  
DOWN

STILL BREATHING

COULD BE  
FAKING



TRIED TO KILL  
TEDD'S DAD

MAYBE DID KILL  
TEDD'S DAD

ALMOST GOT GRACE



THIS POWER IS  
TOO MUCH

CAN'T KEEP IT

GONNA  
BE USELESS  
AGAIN

WORSE  
THAN  
USELESS

BURNT  
OUT



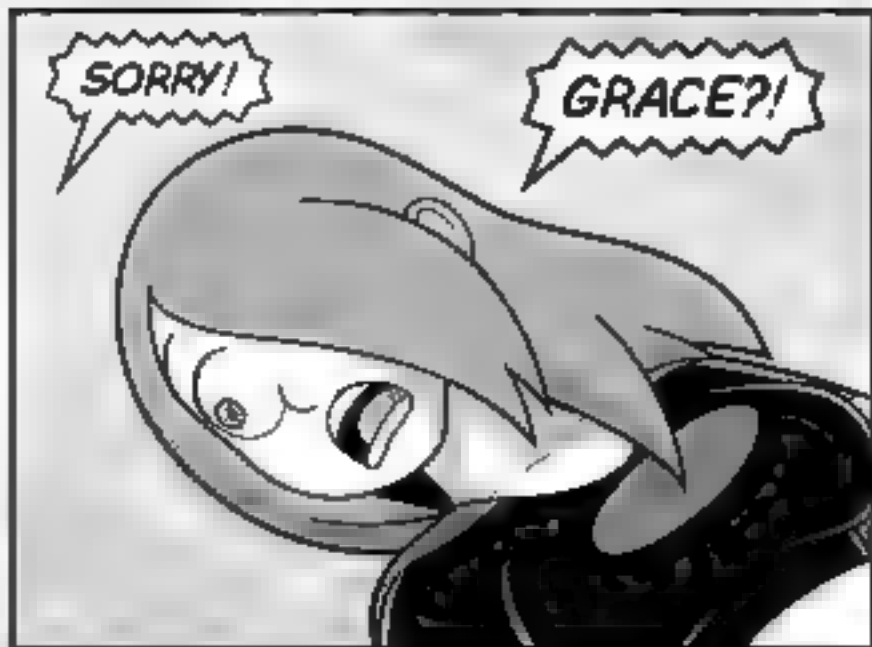
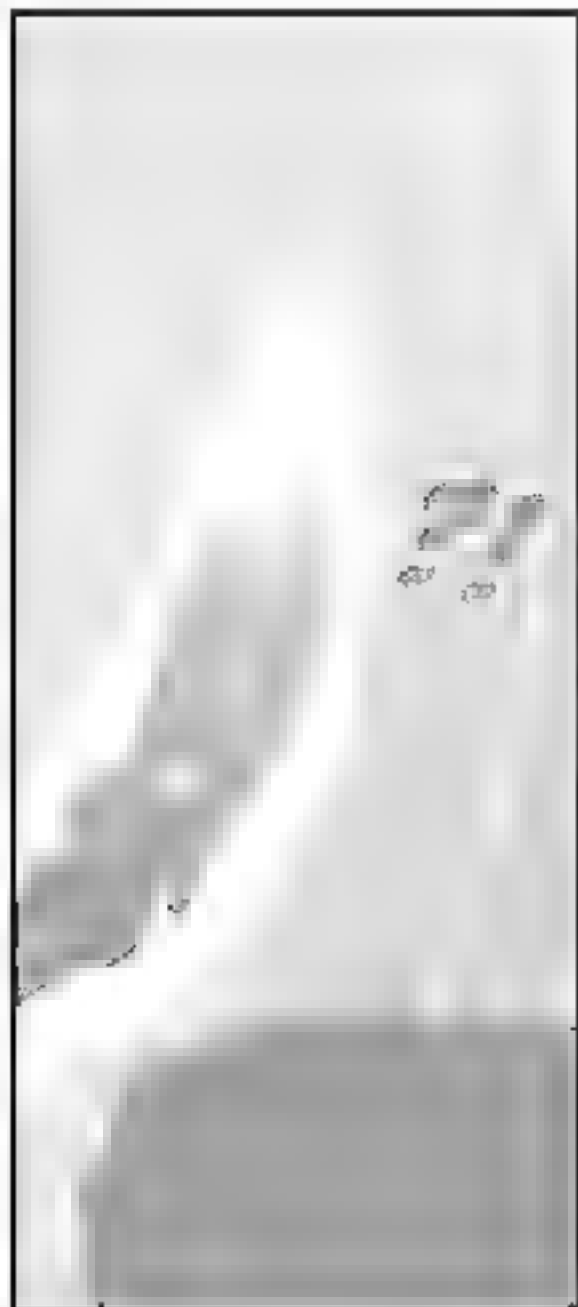
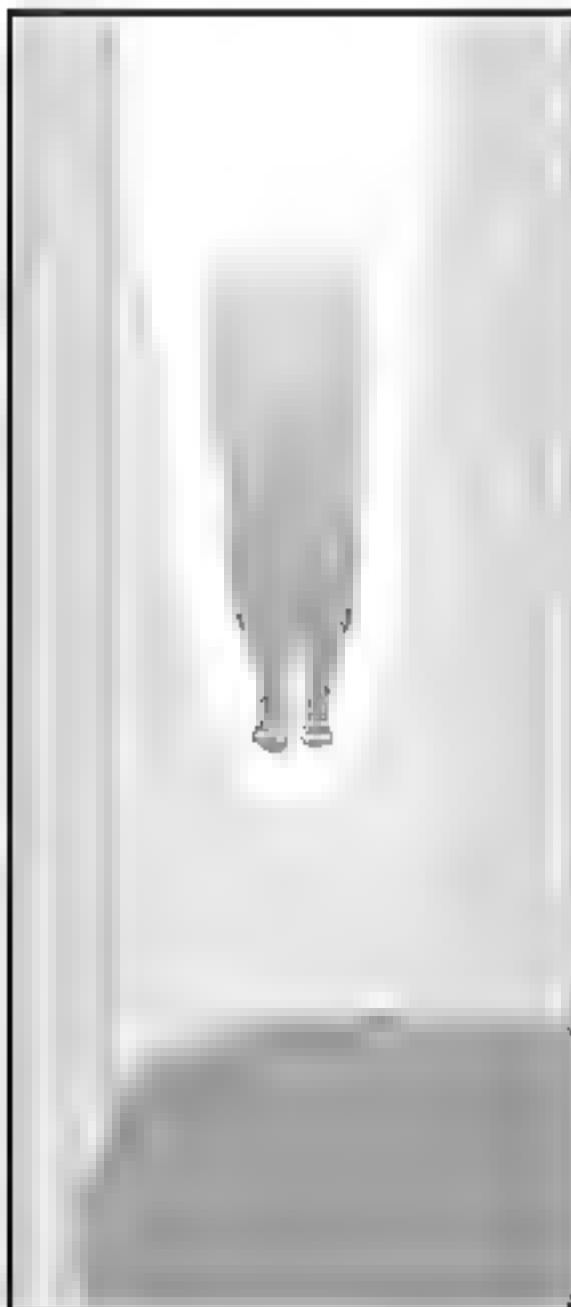
NO WAY NOT  
BURNT OUT

ONE LAST  
ATTACK

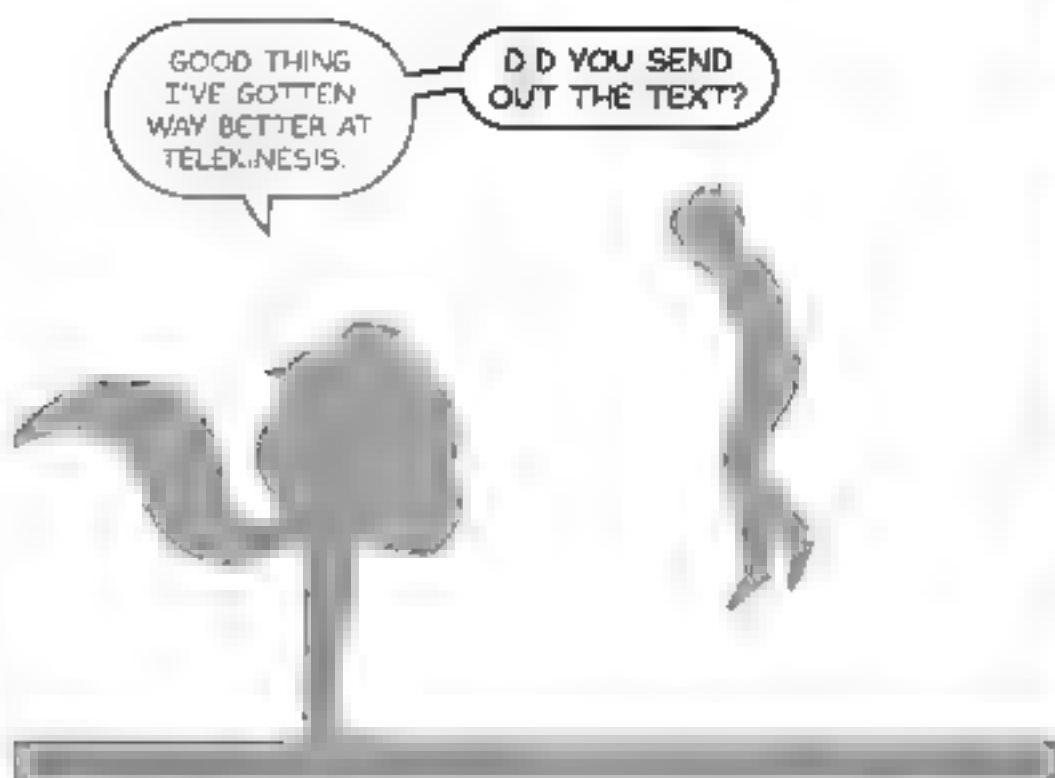
**FINISH  
IT**



**KEEP THEM SAFE**







GOOD THING  
I'VE GOTTEN  
WAY BETTER AT  
TELEKINESIS.

DID YOU SEND  
OUT THE TEXT?



NO I... I SAW  
TEDD'S DAD GET  
HIT, AND...

A-AND  
THE GRIFFIN,  
AND...



HE SAID THEY  
WOULDN'T GET  
HERE QUICKLY.

YOU NEEDED  
HELP RIGHT  
AWAY, AND.

I THOUGHT I'D  
FIND YOU FASTER  
WITH THAT VISION  
SPELL I WAS TALKING  
ABOUT SO I

I DROPPED  
MY PHONE



WELL... TO  
BE HONEST I  
WAS SORT OF  
COUNTING ON  
YOU TO "GO  
EVIL" AND CATCH  
UP WITH US...

...AND GIVEN  
HOW CLOSE  
HE WAS TO  
GRABBING ME,  
I THINK YOU  
MADE THE  
RIGHT CALL

He did.



YE  
GODS,  
LAD!

You're... Quite the hero!

But please... *S/T*.  
You've already... Knocked  
sense... Back into me, and  
you're... Injured ..

I've no intent...  
OF fighting anymore.







GRACE?

NO MORE  
DEX-V BES.  
YOU REALLY  
SHOULD—



WHO OR WHAT  
WAS CONTROLLING  
YOU? ARE THEY  
STILL HERE?!



I doubt... They were  
**EVER** here. I came to  
your side because... I  
had just... enough  
awareness... To know I  
had to get away...

...From royalty.



YOU WERE COMPELLED TO  
ATTACK ROYALTY, BUT YOU  
HAD ENOUGH CONTROL TO  
COME TO OUR WORLD TO  
TRY AND **AVOID** ROYALTY?



It seemed like a good  
idea... at the time.

I also knew... Two  
other griffins who  
could help me... Would  
be here soon, if not  
already here.



I'M...

I'M SO SORRY

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE...



**DON'T APOLOGIZE!** There is a **FINE LINE**  
between a hero and... a **FOOL**, and you are  
**BETTER** than a fool!

I lost control,  
but I  
**REMEMBER**  
every move I made.  
Every thought not  
my own.

I **NEEDED**  
to be knocked  
out, and you  
swooped in  
**JUST** in time  
to do it.



A **SECOND** later,  
and I would have  
**BROKEN** your  
friend's tail beneath my  
fist, and **THEN**...

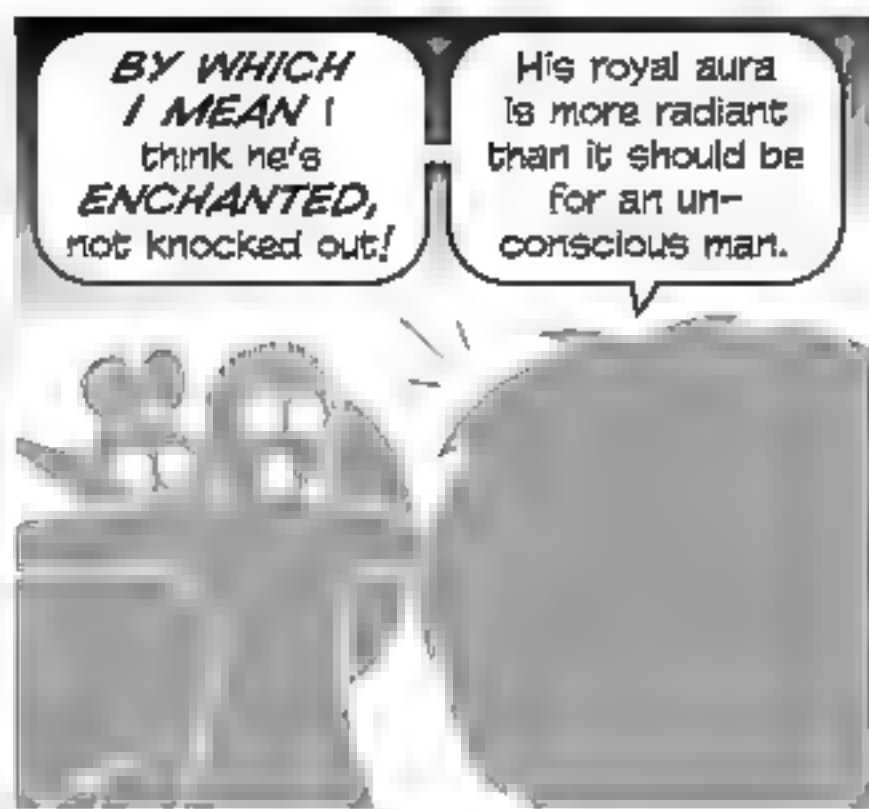
Well, I'd rather not  
elaborate on *that*.



SPEAKING OF SERIOUS INJURY, I REALLY THINK WE NEED TO GET EDWARD TO A HOSPITAL?!

HE'S STILL UNCONSCIOUS!

I... Don't think he's unconscious.



BY WHICH I MEAN I think he's **ENCHANTED**, not knocked out!

His royal aura is more radiant than it should be for an unconscious man.



He should **ALSO** be **MUCH** more injured. He must have reflexively put up defenses, **AND** softened his landing.

One way to reduce damage from such a landing is to go completely limp, but that's very difficult to do in the heat of the moment.

I doubt he **MEANT** to effectively knock himself out, but I'm guessing this is a side effect of a spell **FORCING** him to go limp.



EDWARD DIDN'T NOTICE MAGIC'S RECENT SWITCH TO MANUAL BECAUSE HE ALWAYS CAST SPELLS THAT WAY.

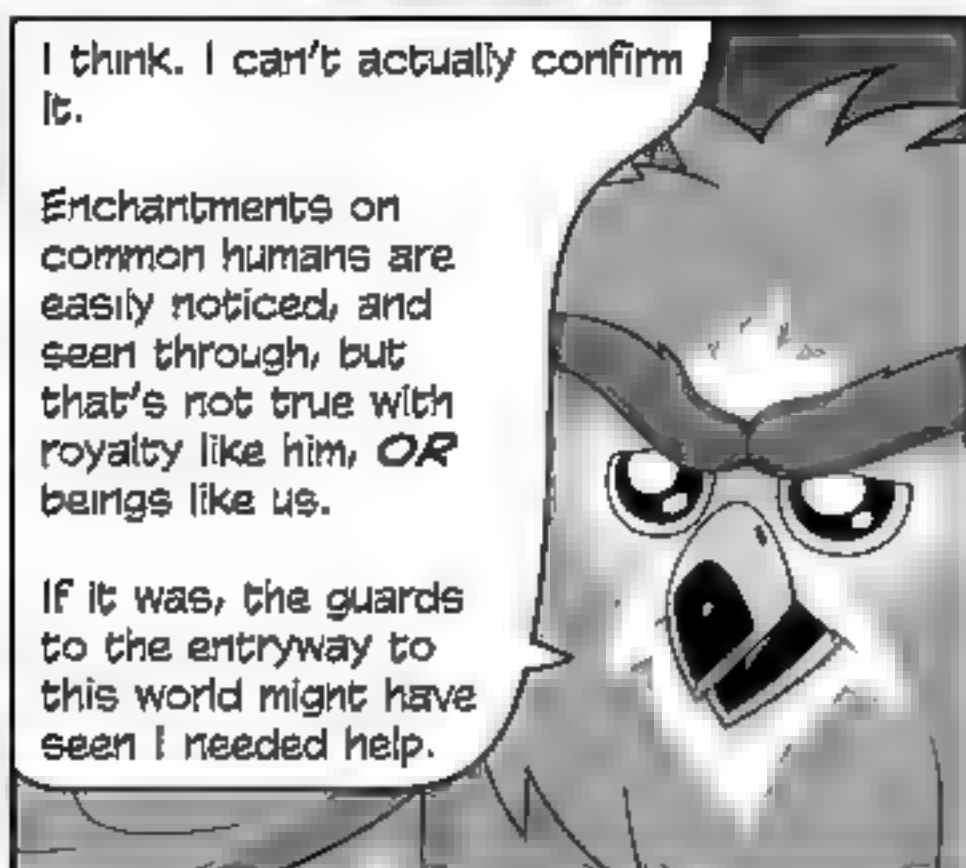
BUT IF HE HAD TO CAST SOMETHING LIFE-SAVING **VERY QUICKLY**...



IF YOU'RE RIGHT, HOW DO WE HELP HIM?

The enchantment should wear off on its own soon.

YOU THINK, OR YOU KNOW?



I think. I can't actually confirm it.

Enchantments on common humans are easily noticed, and seen through, but that's not true with royalty like him, **OR** beings like us.

If it was, the guards to the entryway to this world might have seen I needed help.



Speaking of those guards...

Three griffins are approaching.

**THREE?!**



But *WHICH* of the two guards...

Please let me stand. They might react badly when they get here if you don't.



LET YOU STAND? WHAT'S STOPPING YOU?

I AM.



I'VE BEEN HOLDING HIM DOWN WITH TELEKINESIS SINCE THE MOMENT I SET YOU DOWN.

HOW STRONG IS SHE?!



I'M NOT SURE HE COULDN'T FORCE HIS WAY OUT OF IT IF HE REALLY TRIED, AND I CAN'T KEEP DOING IT FOR MUCH LONGER ANYWAY.



OKAY, BUT I'M PUSHING DOWN TWICE AS HARD IF YOU MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVEMENTS!

Understood. Thank you.

PLEASE DON'T MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVEMENTS I CAN'T ACTUALLY DO THAT AND MY ANTENNAE ARE SO TIRED

I have not introduced myself. I am...

# LIAM TYRANT SLAYER

I'M GRACE.

ELLIOT UM.  
"TYRANT SLAYER"?

An ancestor of  
mine took issue  
with a tyrant.

THIS IS EDWARD. AND  
I'M SETTING HIM DOWN...

I REALLY WANT  
MY ARMS AND TAILS  
FREE BEFORE MORE  
PEOPLE SHOW UP

...BUT MY ANTENNAE ARE  
STAYING FOCUSED ON YOU

WHICH YOU MAY LACK  
CONTEXT FOR. BUT—

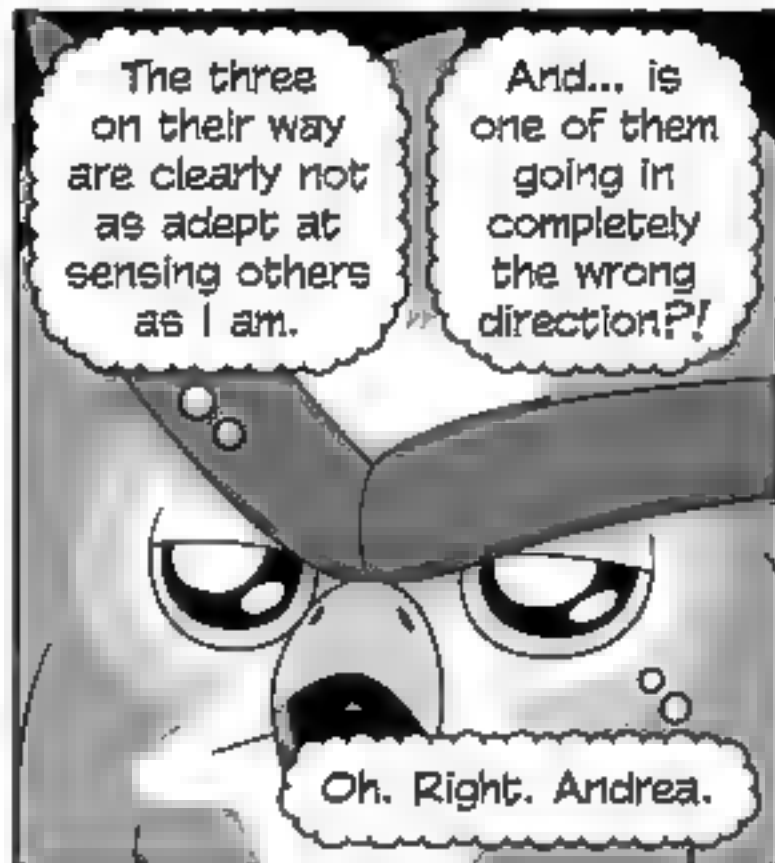
No, I understand.  
They focus your  
telekinesis.

I GUESS IT WAS  
PRETTY OBVIOUS.

I apologize if the  
guard who's about  
to arrive is rude.

**I WILL  
REPRIMAND AS  
NECESSARY.**

THANKS?





# LORD TYRANT SLAYER!



Are these...



We are **NOT** fighting, and all fault for this situation lies with **ME**. They did nothing wrong, and are to be treated with respect.

Even **THAT**?



**WHY ARE YOU HERE, Dwight?** **YOU** should be guarding the way to this world!

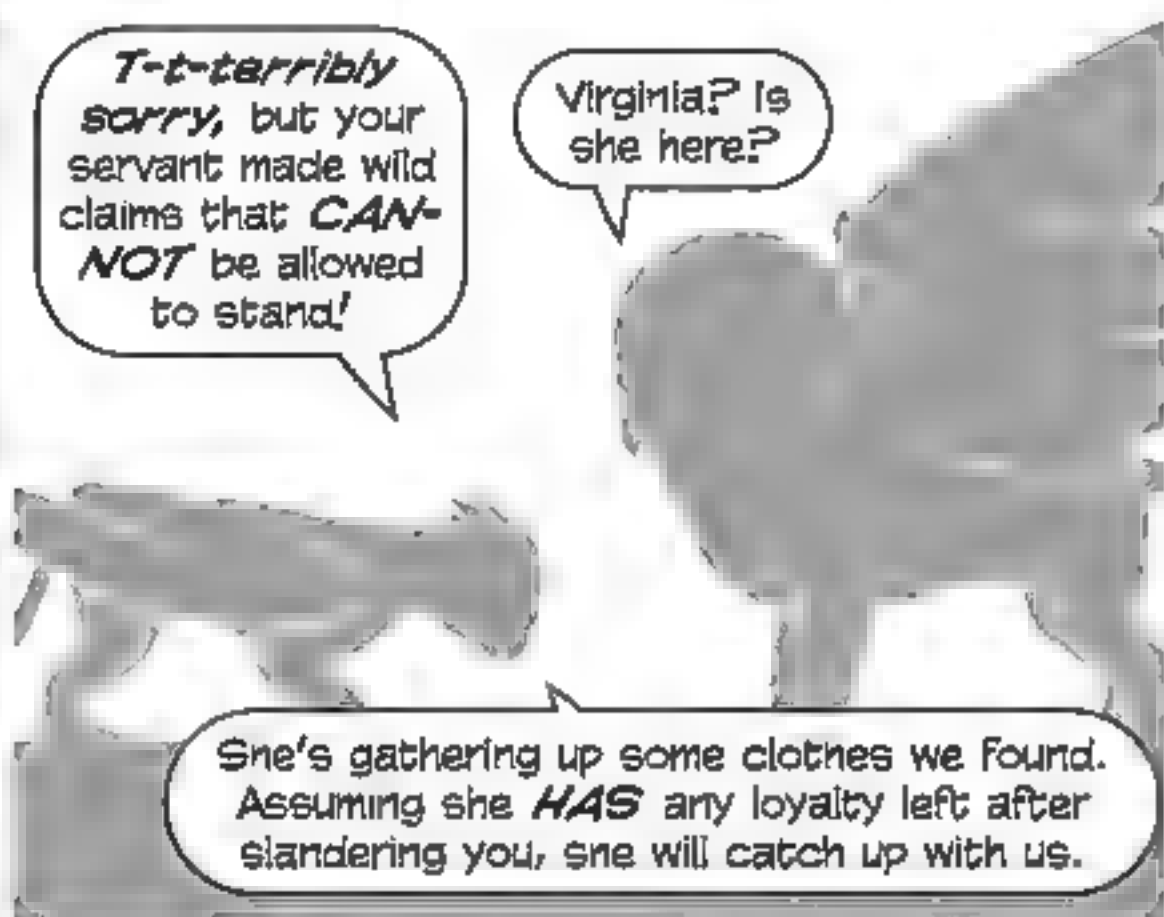


HEY, YEAH! WHY IS A GUARD HERE IF THEY DIDN'T NOTICE ANYTHING WRONG WITH "LORD TYRANT SLAYER" WHEN HE LEFT?



**T-t-terribly sorry**, but your servant made wild claims that **CAN-NOT** be allowed to stand!

Virginia? Is she here?



She's gathering up some clothes we found. Assuming she **HAS** any loyalty left after slandering you, she will catch up with us.



Meaning only that royalty here **HIDES**, and rules from **THE SHADOWS**.



Hello. Tara, you tend to Elliot. I'll make sure the royalty and the girl are okay.

Right!



I-I'M FINE! YOU DON'T NEED TO



**FINE MY TAIL.** I **BARELY** recognize you, you're **SO HOLLOW**, and your hands are a **MESS**.

IS "HOLLOW" WHAT THEY CALL BEING BURNT OUT ON MAGIC?



I can sanitize the area and manually mend surface level cuts. That should prevent infection and scarring, or at least keep it light.

We don't have the expertise needed for internal healing, and in the state you're in, I don't recommend healing acceleration.


It could do more harm than good with your current low stamina.




UH.. OKAY WOW THANK YOU

It's the least we can do.







And what, exactly, did Virginia have to say about me?



She claimed you were acting strangely, and that something "felt off" about you.




She got it into her head that you were under **MIND CONTROL**, and practically **BEGGED** me to help retrieve you.




I see. Well, Dwight, that wasn't betrayal. I really was under mind control.


You—  
**WHAT?!**



I was compelled to attack royalty, and to not tell anyone.



Knowing Andrea and Tara were on their way, and thinking there wouldn't be any royalty, I made my way here.



Unfortunately, there **WAS** royalty here, and there was fighting.

There... but...

That unconscious man...

His aura...



**YOU ATTACKED FOREIGN ROYALTY?!**

This doesn't make it okay, but he's not considered royalty on this side of things.



UM, HI! I'M GRACE



Y-YES! HELLO!  
I'M ANDREA!

And yes!  
Unconscious  
royalty!  
Check for  
injury and  
help heal,  
yes!



Forgive me, but... How  
could anyone control  
**YOU?** Your defenses  
are a **FORTRESS!**

They caught  
me by surprise. I  
didn't see them.



They surprised you.

**YOU**, with your  
**LEGENDARY**  
awareness.

Yes. They  
surprised me.



And **WHILE** under mind  
control, you had enough  
freedom and awareness  
to come here, but **NOT**  
to say anything.

Yes. I still had  
some control.



And in **SPITE** of that  
much control, once you  
sensed royalty here,  
you couldn't resist  
attacking.

Yes, though  
I did try.



And you can remember  
**EVERYTHING YOU  
DID** while under mind  
control.

Yes, thanks to  
my defenses.



Forgive me, Lord Tyrant  
Slayer, but that's  
unbelievable!

You think I am lying.

**I DID NOT  
SPECIFICALLY  
SAY THAT.**

Masking one's presence is a skill. Summoning up power for a spell **MIGHT** give you away, but not if you can cast the spell in the same moment.



Really, the best evidence that Liam was under mind control is that everyone here is still alive.



ZAP

Because mind control limits magic use...

Right. What sort of magic did Lord Tyrant Slayer use while attacking?



JM... I ASSUME FLYING NEEDS MAGIC, BECAUSE GRIFFINS ARE TOO BIG TO FLY OTHERWISE...

Hey.

AND THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE I COULD SENSE WITH MY ANTENNAE, BUT I NEVER SAW IT?



PHANTOM ARMS.

HE HAD TWO GIANT, HUMAN-LIKE ARMS FLOATING AROUND HIM.



Flying is nothing. So are "phantom arms". Our **BABIES** figure out how to do **THAT**.



Nothing else? Glowing feathers? Burning Talons? Song magic?

UH...

NO...



Then it's true.



Lord Tyrant Slayer wasn't fighting at **ANYTHING** close to his full strength.





SO NOT ONLY DID I BEAT UP SOMEONE WHILE THEY WERE UNDER MIND CONTROL, I DID SO WHILE THEY WERE SEVERELY WEAKENED?

Hey, you should sit down.

Are you **SURE** you didn't do any more magic, Liam? This man seems unconscious, but I see no signs of injury, and his aura is **MUCH** too visible.

He reacted to my charging by putting up a magic barrier.

When I slammed into the barrier, it burst in a way that sent him flying.

I think he reflexively cast defenses, including an enchantment to go limp that did more than intended. That said, I imagine it saved his life.

And **YOU'RE** fine after ramming into the equivalent of an **EXPLODING CASTLE WALL?**

▷BLINK◁ ▷BLINK◁

Huh. Now that you mention it, that should have killed me.

**KILLED YOU?!**

I ran into it head-first at top speed **WITHOUT** magic protection. I'm not **INVINCIBLE**.

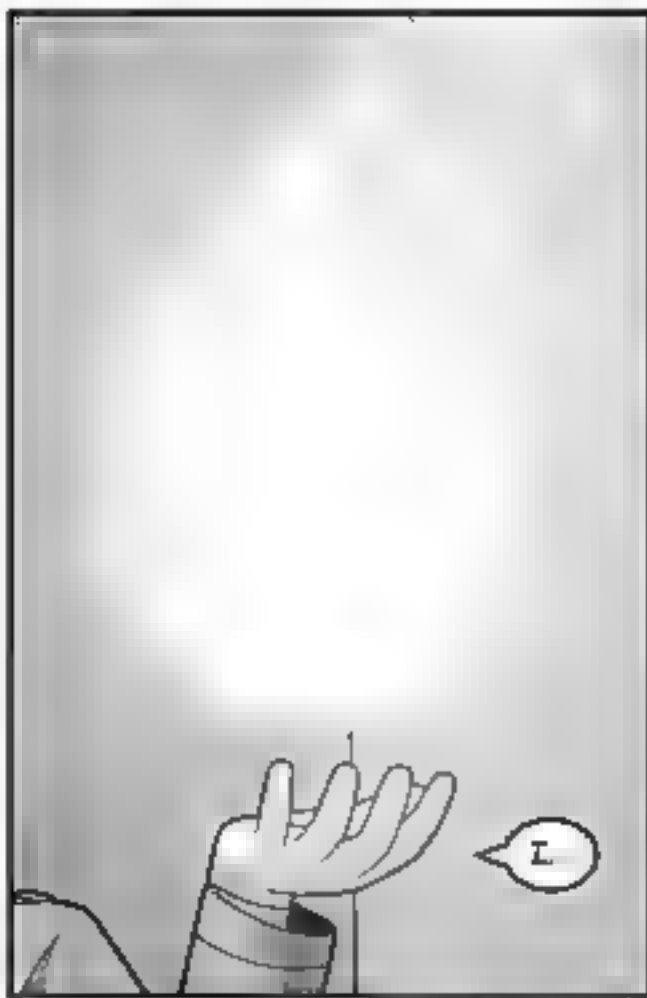
**K-KILLED?!**

✂️✂️✂️✂️

**AH!** There she is.

Don't worry, virginia! I am undamaged!





I

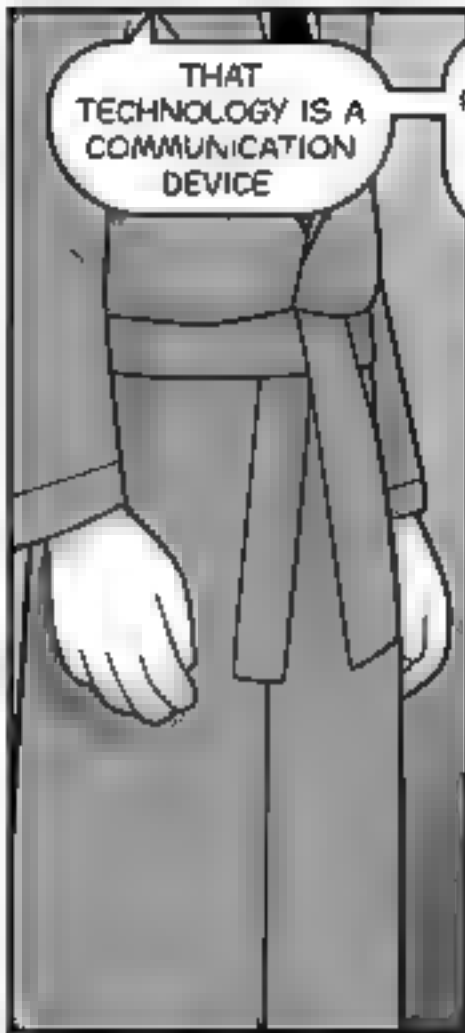


FWOOF

...AM  
EDWARD  
VERRES.



HE'S NOT  
KEEPING IT?!



THAT  
TECHNOLOGY IS A  
COMMUNICATION  
DEVICE



THAT LIGHT WAS  
FROM A SCREEN THAT  
CAN BE INTERACTED  
WITH, AND DISPLAY  
INFORMATION.



THE LIGHT CAME ON BECAUSE THE DEVICE  
RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM SOMEONE VERY FAR  
AWAY OR SIMPLY FROM HOW IT'S BEING HELD.



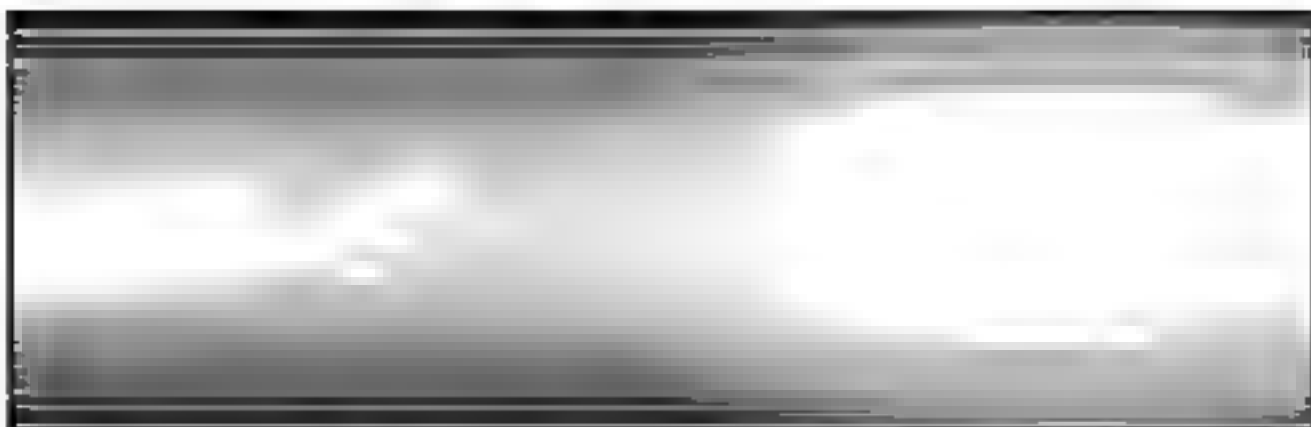
EITHER WAY  
IT IS NOT A  
DANGER TO  
ANYONE.



AND  
NEITHER  
AM I.

NOT  
UNLESS  
I HAVE  
TO BE.

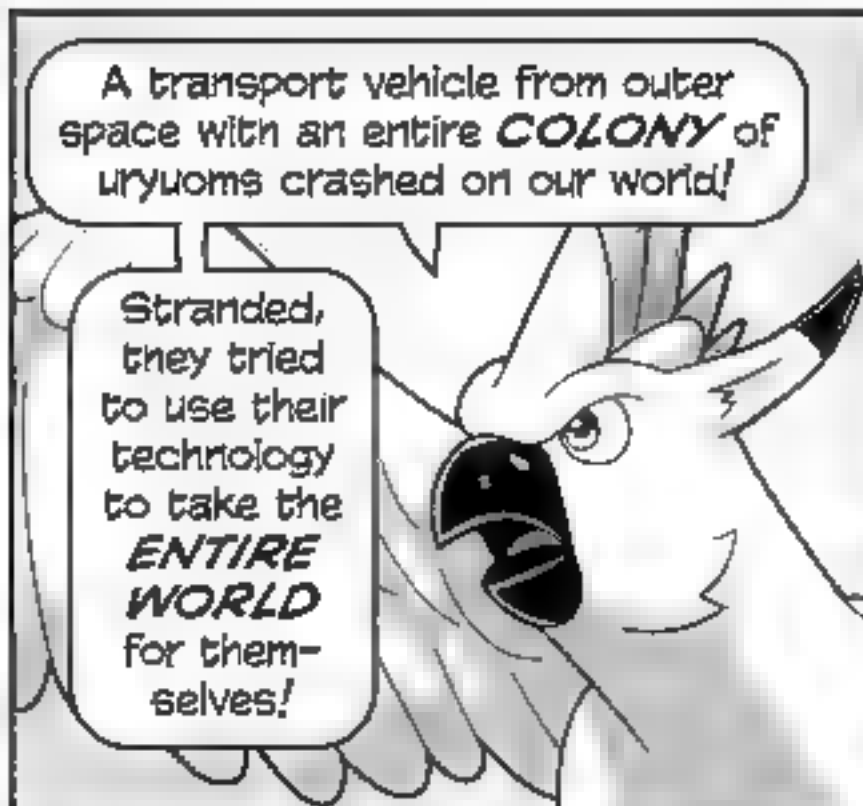








SIGH



A transport vehicle from outer space with an entire **COLONY** of uryuoms crashed on our world!

Stranded, they tried to use their technology to take the **ENTIRE WORLD** for themselves!



THAT'S ONE VERSION OF EVENTS FROM SEVERAL THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

SEVERAL THOUSAND YEARS?! HE MAKES IT SOUND LIKE LAST WEEK!



It's **OFFICIAL HISTORY!** It's taught in government-funded schools and everything!



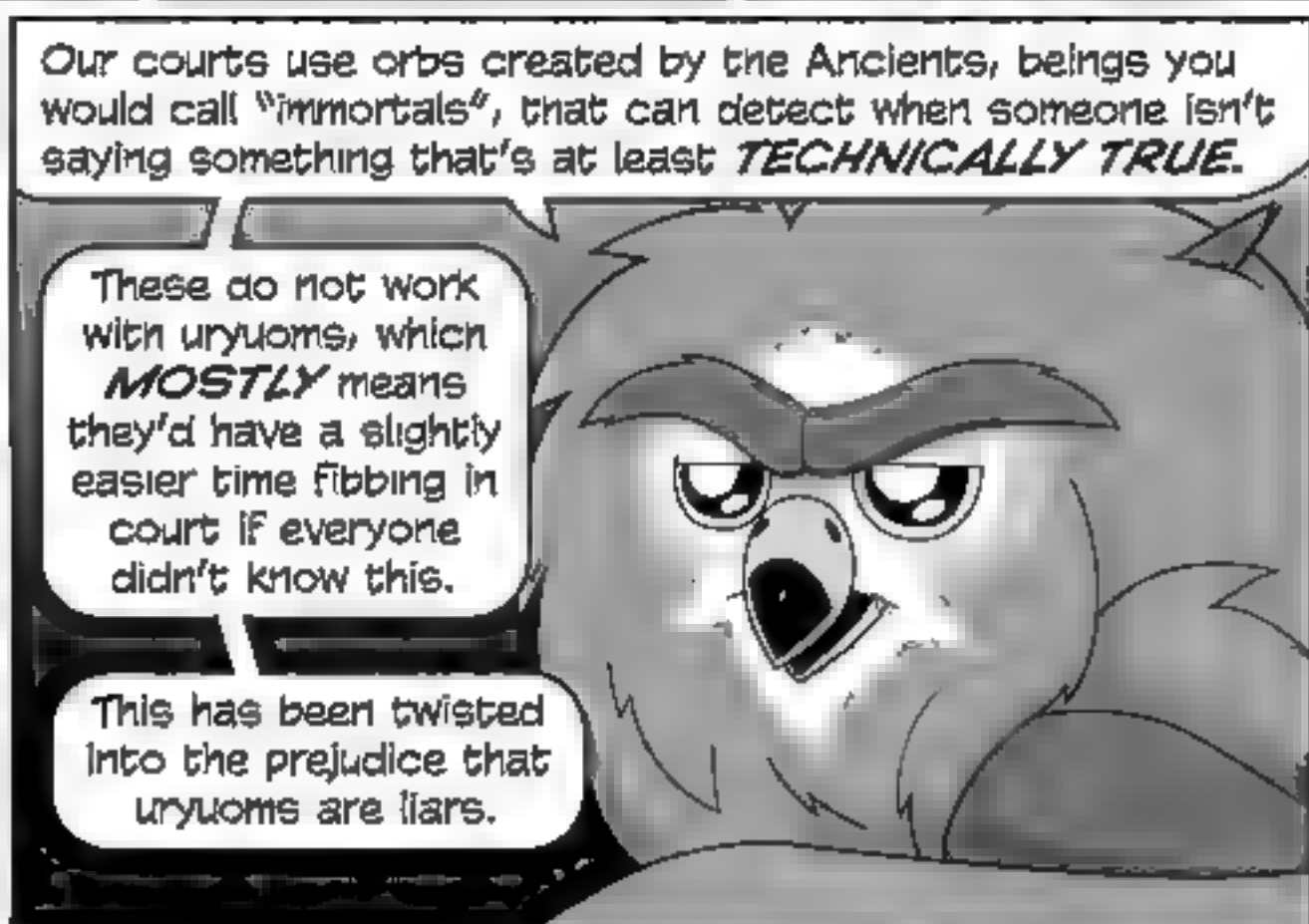
There **ARE** records from that time that suggest the situation wasn't **NEARLY** that simple, nor one-sided.



**URYUOM** records say that, and **URYUOMS** can **LIE!**



AS OPPOSED TO **EVERYONE ELSE** WHO EXPLODE IF THEY LIE?



Our courts use orbs created by the Ancients, beings you would call "immortals", that can detect when someone isn't saying something that's at least **TECHNICALLY TRUE**.

These do not work with uryuoms, which **MOSTLY** means they'd have a slightly easier time fibbing in court if everyone didn't know this.

This has been twisted into the prejudice that uryuoms are liars.

I didn't mean *IN GENERAL*.  
I meant about *BIG*,  
on the record—



# ENOUGH!



Ultimately, these reasons to distrust uryuoms are *EXCUSES*. If they were not there, people would invent *OTHER* ways to rationalize it.



The prejudice against uryuoms boils down to them originating from somewhere else, and being different.



They cannot use the same magic everyone else can, and we deny them the technology they could use to bridge the gap.



This limits their work options, and denies them conveniences others take for granted.



Prejudices are passed on, and those in power make scapegoats of them.



We created, and perpetuate, the situation they're in, and then judge them for not doing more.

YOU INCLUDE YOURSELF IN THAT



Is that...  
**ANGER** under his mask?

I am an advocate for change, but I cannot pretend I stand outside the system.

Especially not when I am as highly ranked in society as a griffin can be.

Whether I like it or not, I am a part of this unjust system, and must remain so if I am to be of any use to anyone.





WAIT WAIT WAIT!



I don't care where people are from! I care about the dangers of uryuom technology usurping magic, and plots that can be lied about, and... and...

I mean, we're not...

We didn't ban their technology for **NO REASON...** Right?



Well... **THIS** is unexpected...



You're fresh out of training, correct? Barely an adult?



I wouldn't say **BARELY** an adult. I—

Y-yes?

**DWIGHT.**

Look at Virginia.



Can you honestly tell me you feel threatened by her?

That she poses any danger to you, a trained guard griffin?

Do you think she would be my assistant if I did not trust her?

Do you truly feel it is right to judge her based purely on her being an uryuom?







I've done all I can for your hands.

ZAP?



I'm sorry, that sounded ominous.

I've mended most of the surface damage, but you should expect bruising.



I'm sorry it took so long. Each little cut had to be mended separately.



SO NOT A PROBLEM! THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

OOF

I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T MOVE THEM MUCH.

You **REALLY** shouldn't.

WINCE!



We should go back.

!



Myself, Lord Tyrant Slayer, and Virginia, I mean.

I'm still on guard duty, and the plot against Lord Tyrant Slayer must be reported immediately.



I know Tara and Andrea are here to talk about the magic clog between our sides of reality.

OH RIGHT!

I COMPLETELY FORGOT ABOUT THAT!









IT'S TRUE MAGIC "CHANGED ITS MIND FOREVER" BECAUSE TECHNOLOGY, AND HOW MANY PEOPLE THERE ARE NOW, ARE MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO HIDE



IT USED TO BE IF TOO MANY PEOPLE KNEW HOW TO USE IT, MAGIC WOULD CHANGE HOW IT WORKS, AND SORT OF TAKE ITSELF AWAY FOR A BIT



IT WAS KINDA LIKE FLIPPING OVER A TABLE WHEN A BOARD GAME ISN'T GOING YOUR WAY



UM, DOES... DOES YOUR SIDE HAVE ?

WE HAVE BOARD GAMES.

I WANT TO SEE GRIFFINS PLAYING BOARD GAMES.



AND THOUGH IT MIGHT BE INEVITABLE BECAUSE MAGIC HAS BEEN KEPT SECRET FOR SO LONG, REVEALING MAGIC NOW IS DANGEROUSLY COMPLICATED



NO NEED TO MENTION THAT MOST OF US DIDN'T KNOW MAGIC WOULD CHANGE IF IT WAS TOO WIDELY KNOWN.

WHICH WOULD ALSO BE TRUE FOR REVEALING URYUOMS.

MAYBE FAR WORSE, GIVEN HOW URYUOMS HERE MUST BE HIDING THEIR PRESENCE...



WHEN I NOTICED YOU, THE GRASS ON THIS SIDE STARTED TO LOOK GREENER. BUT

MAYBE IT'S NOT...



AND THEY HAVE THE "THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE" EXPRESSION.



REALITY IS WEIRD.



I... I-I'm sorry, but we **REALLY** should be going.

There's no telling **WHAT** all there was to this plot to have Lord Tyrant Slayer attack any royalty he saw, and...



I have a couple questions before we go.

TWITCH-



Edward Verres. I was correct about what happened to you, wasn't I?



You heard everything while "unconscious", which is why you haven't asked an **AVALANCHE** of questions.

CORRECT



Secondly, that barrier.

It was **INTENDED** to be non-lethal, wasn't it?



IT IS INTENDED TO STOP CHARGING BEINGS WITHOUT HARMING THEM.

IT'S NEVER BURST LIKE THAT BEFORE



**HM...** We subconsciously surround ourselves in a bit of magic while **FLYING...**

I suppose it's **POSSIBLE** I had magic around me while charging that did something?

THAT COULD BE IT



THE TRUTH IS SIMPLER. BUT HE DOESN'T NEED TO KNOW IT

I MESSED UP THE SPELL.



**LORD TYRANT SLAYER!**

Can we *PLEASE* go and report what *MIGHT* have been a plot to **MURDER THE QUEEN** now?!

HEH! If *THAT* was the plan, it was a *POOR* one.

But I concede the point. We should leave.

And so...

HE SAID HE WAS THE HIGHEST RANK IN SOCIETY GRIFFINS COULD BE

CAN GRIFFINS NOT BE ROYALTY?

Only those with a royal aura can be true royalty, and only *HUMANS* have ever had that aura.

The *IDEA* was to keep magic at the center of political power, but I *REALLY* think our ancestors dropped the ball on *THAT* agreement.

SO, EVEN AS A NOBLE, LORD TYRANT SLAYER CAN'T DO MUCH MORE THAN ARGUE FOR CHANGE.

AND HOPE THAT ROYALTY LISTENS.



Royalty **DOES** need the support of the people, so things could change with **OVERWHELMING** popular opinion, but...



Things are rigged against that, yeah.

"There is one guard on the right rotation that we **CAN** trust, but there are always **TWO** guards."

"By my command, or a serious situation involving me, we can get the guard we don't trust to leave their post."

"Thanks to the truth orbs, however, whatever explanation I give later has to **TECHNICALLY** be **TRUE**."

"We will fabricate a scenario centered on me that justifies them abandoning their post to go to the other side."

"I will get the guard far away from the entrance on that side, and keep them busy."

"We can use the fact that friends of mine are meeting people there to talk at length about our side of reality."

"I will give you as much time as I can to reach the other side, and to get somewhere safe."

"I won't be able to join your mission, **OR** help you return home, for a long time."

"Until then, my friends..."



The rest is up to you.

End Part 7

Part 8 Begins Wednesday, June 29th

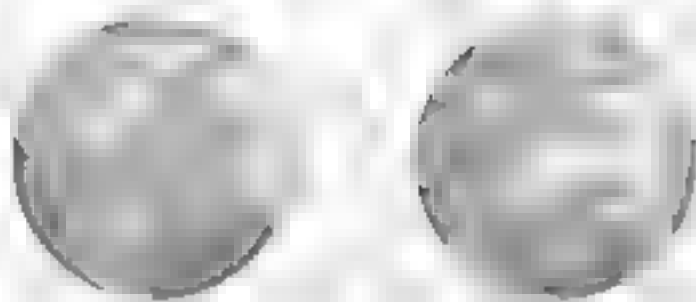
Thanks to hack writers who think they know how quantum physics work, we're all familiar with the concept of parallel universes

IN OUR UNIVERSE,  
SUNGLASSES  
AREN'T COOL

**GASP!**



Less familiar are people with the shocking truth that there are at least two sides to our own universe, and there are ways that these sides are connected



One connection is a flow of ambient magic

On the side lucky enough to have Grace, this ambient magic does not get used for much, and can even be a nuisance



HEY I'M A  
MONSTER WHO  
EXISTS OUTSIDE  
THE BALANCE OF  
NATURE AND  
MORALITY, AND I  
SMELLED TASTY  
AMBIENT MAGIC?

ANYWAY,  
I'M GOING TO  
RAMPAGE.

On the side lucky enough to have griffins, however, ambient magic energy is used as a renewable resource, and not having enough of it can be an inconvenience



We  
definitively  
use it for  
stuff, I  
assure  
you.

Pandora Chaos Raven, attempting to change the world in ways that would be better for her son, disrupted the local flow of magic from the side with Grace to the side with griffins.



Effectively, she  
made a clog in  
magic

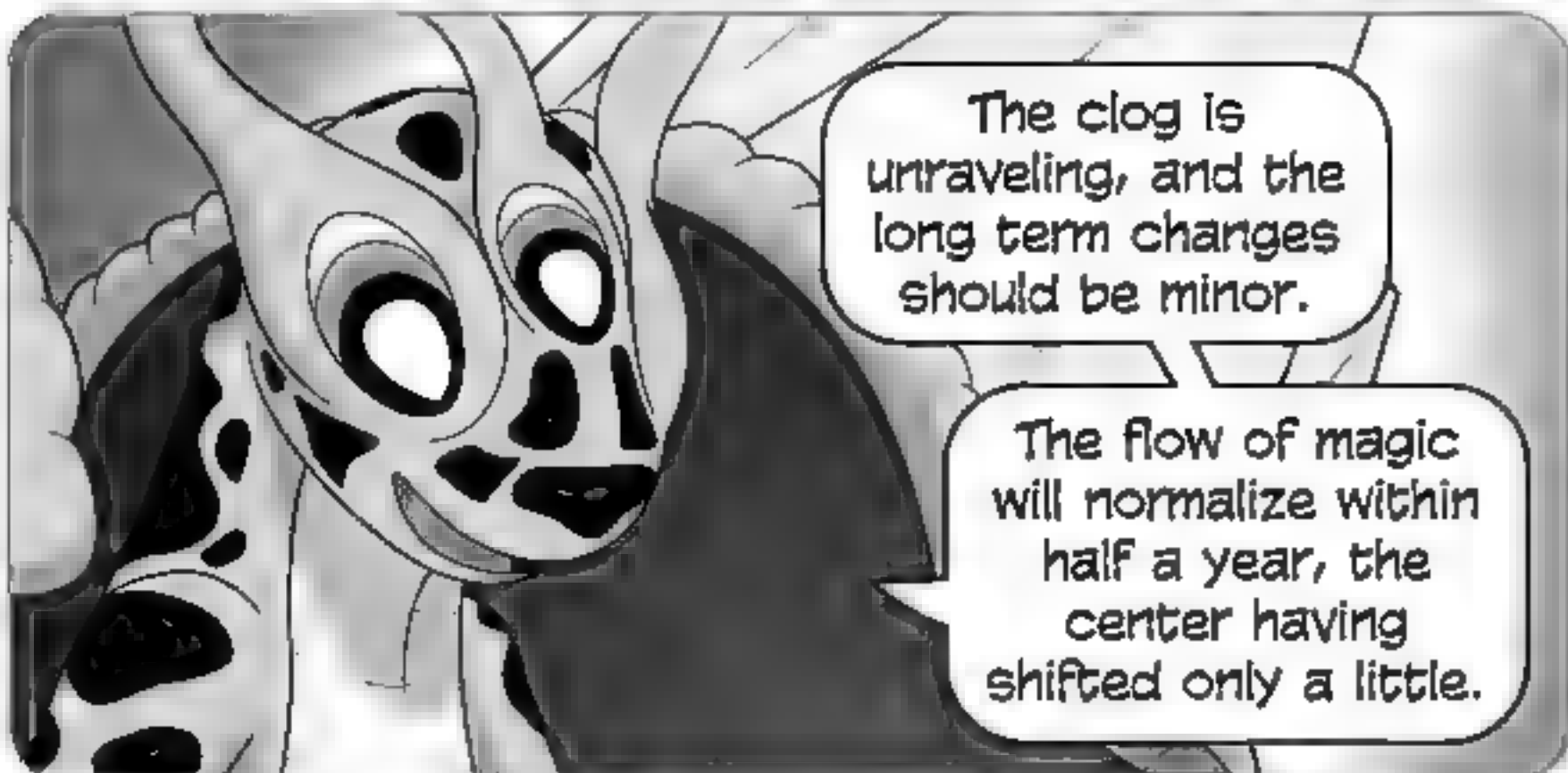
Though she later decided to undo the clog, convoluted immortal rules meant she couldn't do it herself. She needed to guide someone else through doing it.

She reset  
before this  
could happen,  
and left no  
instructions  
behind

The magic clog has not been removed,  
but it also has not been maintained.



Left alone,  
nature adapts.  
It reclaims.



The clog is  
unraveling, and the  
long term changes  
should be minor.

The flow of magic  
will normalize within  
half a year, the  
center having  
shifted only a little.








THAT IS GOOD NEWS.



IT IS!

Though I would not be here...




...If there was  
**NO** cause for  
concern.

A GRID?



Longitude  
and  
latitude.

This is woodland,  
where the center  
of the flow of  
magic was...



...And **THIS** is where  
it's going to end up.



**MOPERVILLE  
UNIVERSITY.**



SO YOU CAN TELL  
THAT THE FLOW OF  
MAGIC IS GOING TO  
WIND UP CENTERED  
ON MOPERVILLE  
UNIVERSITY...

...BUT WHY IS  
UNCLEAR...

...AND POSSIBLY  
HASN'T HAPPENED.

I see many  
answers  
without  
knowing how  
they were  
reached.

I am not  
intentionally  
cryptic. I  
just know  
less than  
one might  
assume.

Even with this  
geographic concern,  
however, magic will  
flow properly again...

...And the change in  
position will only  
result in **TWICE** as  
much Ambient Magic  
as before the clog!

ooo

TWICE

Yes. A minor  
difference.

HOW..  
IS TWICE  
MINOR...?

ESPECIALLY IN A PLACE THAT HAD  
MORE AMBIENT MAGIC THAN MOST  
PLACES EVEN BEFORE THE CLOG?

On average, it was  
**TWENTY** times as  
much with the clog.

Everything  
is relative.



SO... YOU HAVE STORIES ABOUT STEVE. BUT NO CONFIRMATION OF STEVE?



Well, we don't call them "Steve", but yes.

Legends portray beings such as "Steve" as similar to the ancients in how they meddle in mortal affairs.



A big difference being that all the Crystalline Turtle Frog legends portray them as being helpful and empathetic.

Stories about **ANCIENTS?** More mixed.

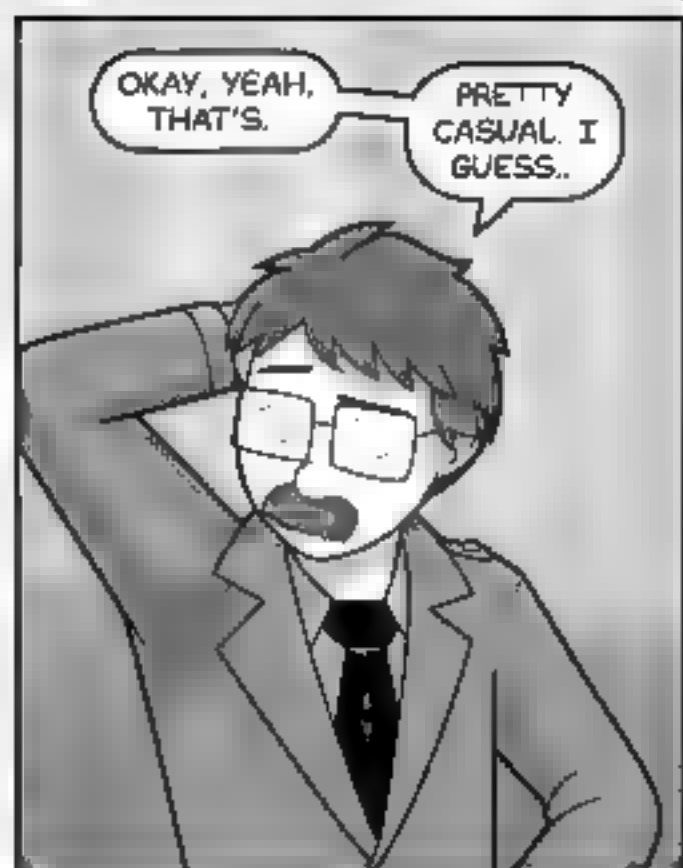


And, on occasion, you just casually speak with one of these Crystalline Turtle Frogs?



I WOULDN'T SAY "CASUALLY"

**YOU CALL THEM STEVE.**



OKAY, YEAH, THAT'S.

PRETTY CASUAL. I GUESS..



I HAVE CAUSE TO SPEAK WITH MANY BEINGS LIKE STEVE. I'M PRETTY USED TO IT



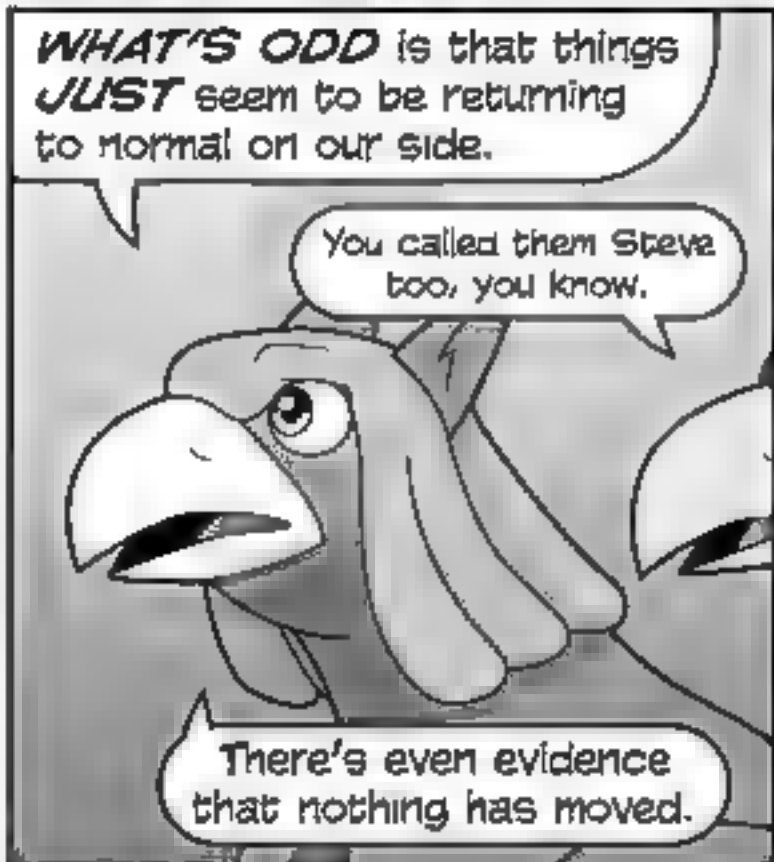
No wonder you weren't intimidated by Liam.

Yean. Liam's strong, but not **STEVE**-strong.



...

What?



**WHAT'S ODD** is that things **JUST** seem to be returning to normal on our side.

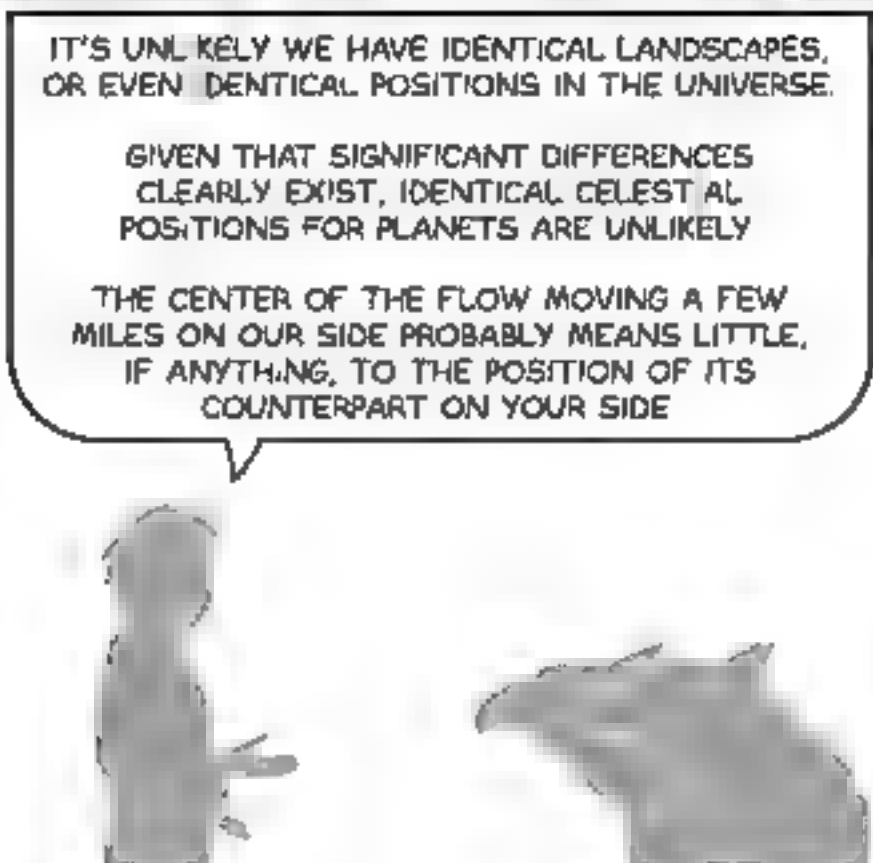
You called them Steve too, you know.

There's even evidence that nothing has moved.



I DON'T THINK THE GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF **WHERE** MAGIC FLOWS ON **OUR SIDE** AFFECTS **YOURS**.

WE HAVE A SHARED REALITY, BUT FOR MOST INTENTS AND PURPOSES, OUR SIDES ARE **SEPARATE UNIVERSES**.



IT'S UNLIKELY WE HAVE IDENTICAL LANDSCAPES, OR EVEN IDENTICAL POSITIONS IN THE UNIVERSE.

GIVEN THAT SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES CLEARLY EXIST, IDENTICAL CELESTIAL POSITIONS FOR PLANETS ARE UNLIKELY

THE CENTER OF THE FLOW MOVING A FEW MILES ON OUR SIDE PROBABLY MEANS LITTLE, IF ANYTHING, TO THE POSITION OF ITS COUNTERPART ON YOUR SIDE



**OF COURSE!** That makes perfect sense.

IT DOES?

It does?



SO THAT IS THE SITUATION. I DO NOT KNOW IF THE MOVING OF THE CENTER ON OUR SIDE WILL HAVE ANY IMPACT ON YOUR SIDE

THE LOCAL AREA ON OUR SIDE, HOWEVER, FACES PERMANENT CONSEQUENCES AS A RESULT OF THE CLOG CORRECTING ITSELF

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?

That being you spoke to...

What did you call them?

I D.D.N'T CALL THEM ANYTHING.

THEY'VE REFUSED TO GIVE ME ANYTHING THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED A NAME

With a name I have given, people who know how could summon me. It is best I choose who I speak with.

I NEED SOMETHING TO CALL YOU. WOULD "STEVE" BE OKAY?

Acceptable.

***YEP THAT'S A MYTHICAL DEITY YOU WERE CHATTING WITH***

It's probably rude to keep saying "mythical".

I guess there's nothing left for us to do but to wait and see if "Steve" was correct.

It... feels awkward to ask this after what happened...

...But given that this will take time to resolve, and we can't take for granted that things will just turn out as we expect, would it be possible to, um...

ARRANGE FUTURE MEETINGS?

I WOULD BE HAPPY TO

Yes. That.

You would?!

YES, AND NOT JUST TO ADDRESS THE CLOG.

OUR SIDES ARE CONNECTED. AND PEOPLE FROM EITHER SIDE MIGHT FIND THEIR WAY TO THE OTHER.

I THINK IT WOULD BE FOR THE BEST IF SOME DEGREE OF COMMUNICATION WERE MAINTAINED.

IF NOTHING ELSE, WE MIGHT LEARN SOMETHING FROM ONE ANOTHER.

I agree! That would be excellent!

A bit surprising you'd agree to it so readily after what happened...

I BEAR NO GRUDGE TOWARDS ANY OF YOU AND WHAT'S DONE IS DONE.

I'D LIKE US TO FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

SO COOL...!

HM?

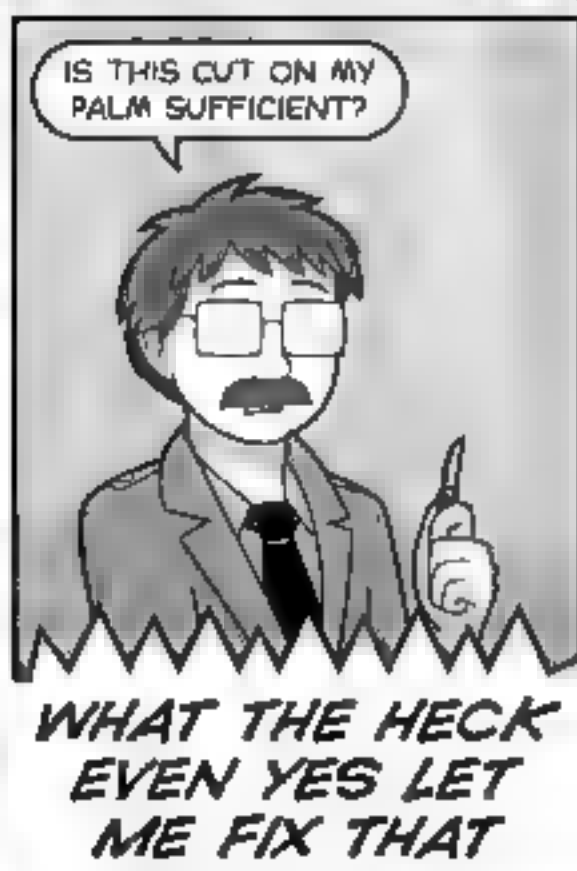
~~ERHEM~~  
NUTHIN'



Ah. Our healing magic isn't perfect. We can speed up healing, but it's strenuous for the patient. It can be dangerous.



I CAN LEARN SPELLS BY OBSERVING THEM. WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO DEMONSTRATE THOSE SPELLS FOR ME?





I HAVE MEANS TO ARRANGE CONTACTING ONE ANOTHER AGAIN, BUT WE CAN DISCUSS THAT AS WE CONCLUDE THIS MEETING.

I WAS HOPING YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO ANSWER A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS FOR ME FIRST

Certainly! What would you like to know?

WHAT EXACTLY IS A "ROYAL" AURA?

Ah. A royal aura is a magic aura that looks like a crown.

I bet it's where they got the idea to connect it with royalty.

THAT'S IT? I THOUGHT IT'D BE A SUPER POWERFUL "BOW DOWN BEFORE ME" SORT OF AURA.

NANASE DOES HAVE THAT SORT OF VIBE TO HER.

Any **CONFIRMED** royalty is strong. A **WEAK** aura can't look like a crown.

Meaning some people only learn they're royalty after training, and **SOME** people born into luxury and power learn they're **NOT** royalty.

HM.

SO SARAH COULD BE A PRINCESS!

WHAT?

WHAT?



Lespuko: Large, three-tailed cousin of Uryuoms. Uryuom hybrids (seyunolus) with uryuom plus lespuko have advanced power and shapeshifting





DID YOU JUST.

Yeah, and look at the faces on your kids over there.



THEY UM... LOOK CONCERNED...

**EXACTLY.**



You threw yourself headfirst into a charging Liam, and you just cut your palm in front of them like that?



You didn't even check with me first. What if I couldn't do any more healing today after Elliot?



**YOU MATTER.**

Value your own wellbeing more.

If not for yourself, then for **THEM.**



**NOW.** I can do the speed-healing spell without you being injured, **OR** the spell hurting you, **BUT** it **WILL** make you tired.

If I did it to Elliot right now, it'd knock him out.

Are you **CERTAIN** you're up for it?



YES.

Okay.

Sorry about the wing slap.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT AND... THANK YOU



I DON'T GET IT (OW SHOULDN'T I DO STUFF WITH MY HANDS.)

TEDD'S DAD JUMPED IN LIAM'S PATH TO SELFLESSLY PROTECT US.

WAS THAT NOT "FOR US"?



AND HE ONLY HURT HIMSELF TO LEARN MAGIC THAT COULD SAVE LIVES IN THE FUTURE

MAYBE HE WAS A LITTLE HASTY ABOUT HOW HE WENT ABOUT GETTING THE HEALING MAGIC, BUT...

WEREN'T THOSE ALL THINGS A HERO SHOULD DO?



Time passed as Tara instructed Edward on, and demonstrated, the second healing spell

Eliot continued to ponder, Andrea continued to ask potentially rude questions.

Can you go full wryuom?

NO, AND I'M NOT SURE WHY?

My understanding is that seyurulu can't for some reason, but I thought maybe you...



And trespassers from the other side of reality rushed through the forest with unwavering resolve

CAN WE STOP YET?!

Mostly unwavering resolve

SERIOUSLY...  
I NEED...  
A BREAK...!

TO THINK YOU WOULD  
BE THE ONE TO TIRE  
FROM RUNNING FIRST

I DON'T  
HAVE...

FOUR LEGS  
RIGHT NOW,  
AND WE'RE  
IN...

A FOREST!

LOWER YOUR  
VOICE. SOMEONE  
MIGHT HEAR.

OUT... OUT HERE?  
AND AFTER ALL  
THE RUNNING?

UNLIKELY, BUT POSSIBLE.  
STILL, LET US TAKE A BREAK.

FINALLY!

ARE YOU SURE  
ABOUT THIS?

YES. IT WON'T DO TO EXHAUST  
OURSELVES, AND WE SHOULD CONFIRM  
THAT WE CAN ACTUALLY USE EVERY-  
THING WE BROUGHT WITH US HERE.

I REALLY... HOPE YOU  
CAN... I DON'T WANT  
TO DO ALL THE MAGIC,  
OR TRY TO RULE  
ANYTHING.

TRUST ME, *NOBODY*  
WANTS *YOU* RULING  
ANYTHING.

THANK YOU. THAT'S  
REASSURING

IF THIS  
WORKS, AND  
WE ARE SEEN,  
REMEMBER:

HERE,  
*TECHNOLOGY*  
IS THE SAFE  
EXCUSE

WWM

IT APPEARS  
MAGIC IS  
AVAILABLE  
TO US.

OH THANK  
GOODNESS.

I WAS NOT PREPARED  
FOR THAT AMOUNT OF  
RESPONSIBILITY

With somewhat awkward goodbyes said, and expectations of seeing each other again at some undetermined point in the future, the two groups parted ways.



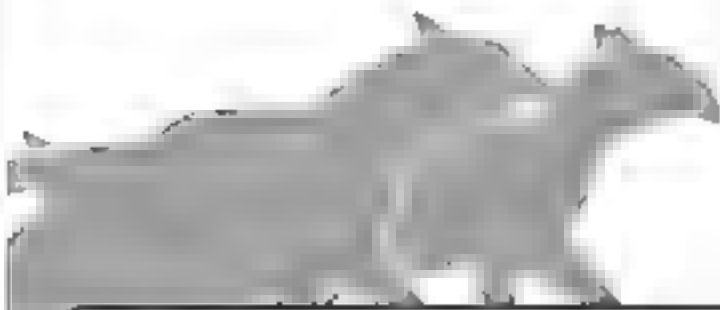
It's a shame we don't have more royalty like that guy.

You mean the man you wing-slapped?



I still can't believe you did that.

He clearly cares about others, doesn't seem to care about differences in species, regularly talks to deities like it's no big deal, and is willing to put himself on the line to help others.



He'd need guidance from others to balance him out, but there's not a leader alive who doesn't need that.

You're not planning to steal him away and become his right hand, are you?

Of course I'm not!

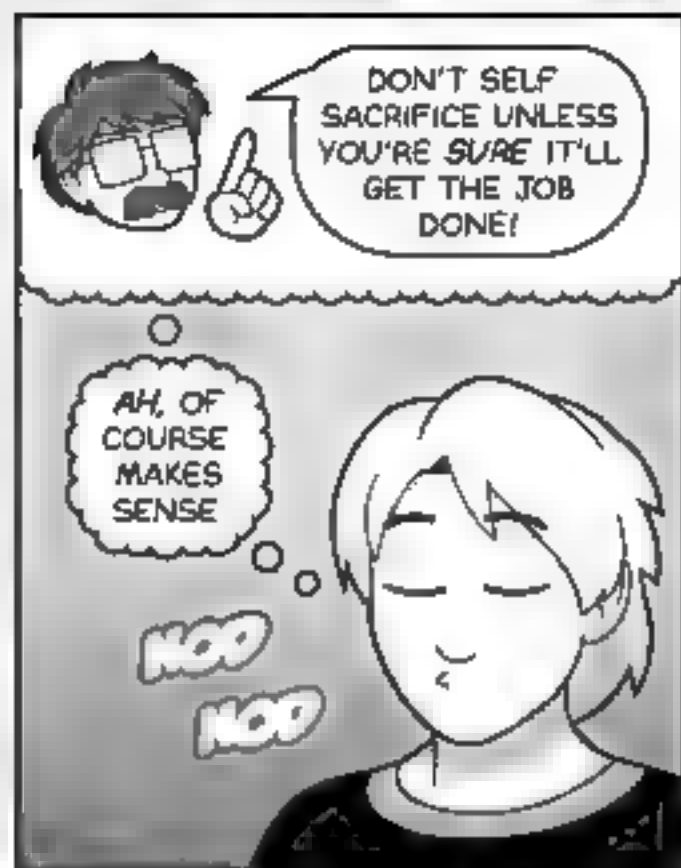
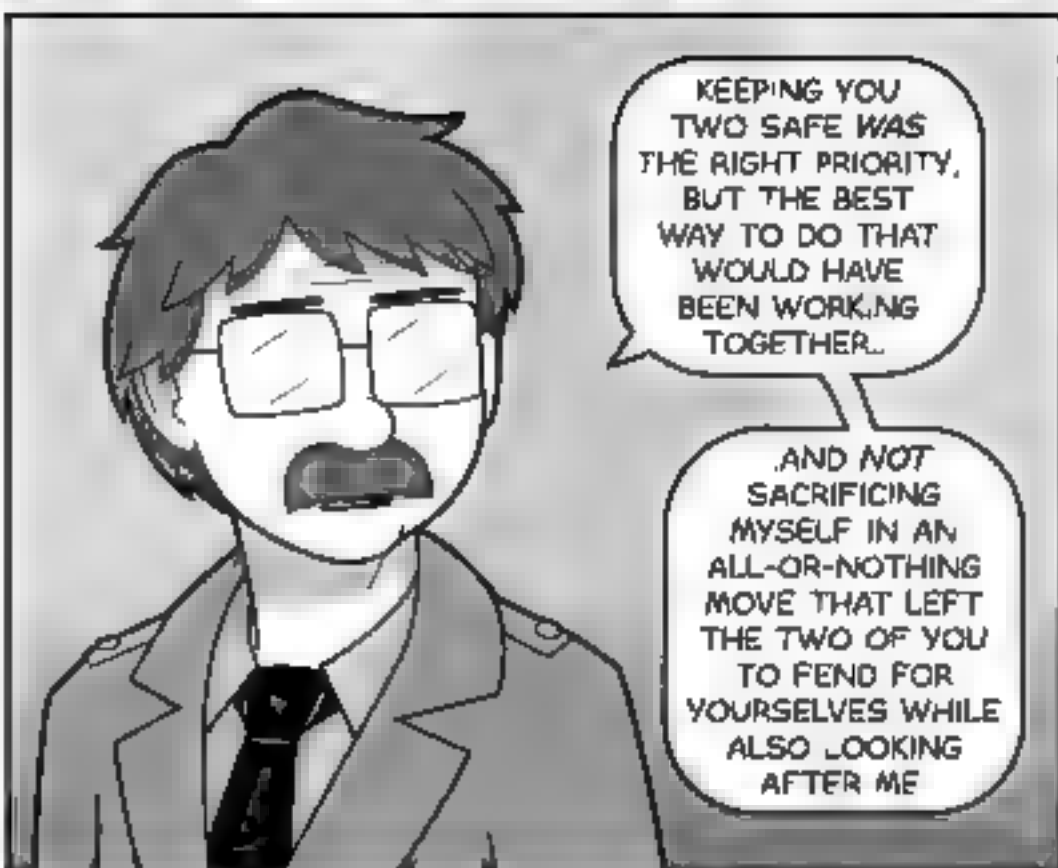
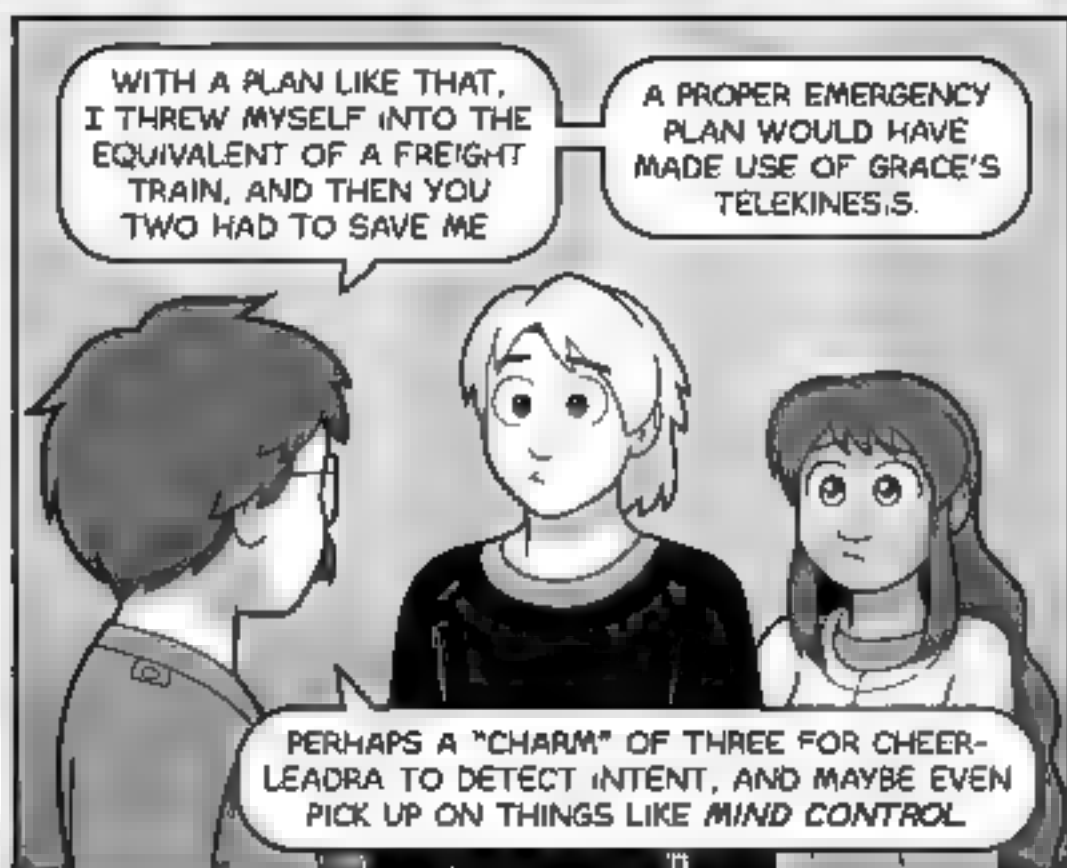


He cares too much about people here. He can't be a good leader on our side if he's spending all his time trying to get back here.



I was joking.





It's difficult to know how long someone who has "burnt out" on magic will remain burnt out

In addition to lacking magic, someone who is burnt out will have a changed hair color.

As such, Edward wanted to take Elliot back to his home in order to provide Elliot with a magic wand for restoring his hair color

This wand would be easy to create, as a magic watch had already been made for Ellen after her "natural" hair color became green (for definitely NOT dragon-related reasons).



Edward also wanted to help along the internal healing of Elliot's hands, which Tara said could be safely done shortly after Elliot ate a big meal.

GRACE, ORDER ENOUGH PIZZA TO FEED TWO NANASES.

AND GET BROWNIES.



Tedd, who had naturally worried a little in spite of being confident that everything would go well

YOUR HAIR...!

WHY IS...?!



Was a BIT startled

The events of earlier that evening were explained to Tedd in the basement while Edward waited upstairs for the pizza



And called Elliot's parents to let them know what happened



I'M NOT SURE THE VILLAIN  
VERSION OF CHEERLEADRA  
PUT ANY NEW THOUGHTS  
IN MY HEAD.

I WAS SO SCARED AND  
*ANGRY* ABOUT WHAT I JUST  
SAW HAPPEN TO YOUR DAD,  
AND WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN TO  
HIM AND GRACE, THAT I...

I THINK EVERYTHING I  
THOUGHT WERE THINGS  
I WOULD'VE THOUGHT  
ANYWAY

I THINK THE  
DIFFERENCE IS I  
DIDN'T SECOND-  
GUESS ANY OF IT

I STILL WOULD'VE  
THOUGHT ALL THOSE  
THINGS. I JUST  
WOULD'VE THOUGHT...  
MORE ABOUT THEM.

COULD BE  
FAKING

MAYBE DID KILL  
TEDD'S DAD

ONE LAST  
ATTACK

FINISH  
IT

I DIDN'T  
QUESTION  
THEM.

AND THAT'S *EXACTLY* WHAT I EXPECTED.

JUST ME, BUT  
WITHOUT AN ANGEL  
ON MY SHOULDER.

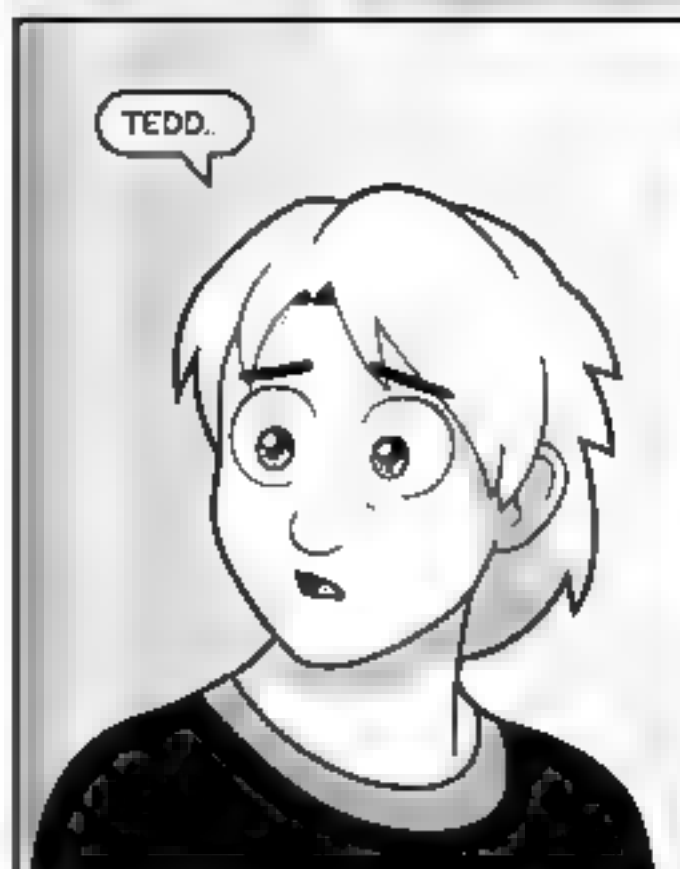
BUT I DID IT ANYWAY,  
BECAUSE I WAS ANGRY  
AND SCARED, AND I DIDN'T  
KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO.

I'M A COWARD

A COWARD WOULD  
DO SOMETHING LIKE  
KICK A RABBIT INTO  
ORBIT AFTER IT  
STARTLED THEM.

YOU WERE DEALING WITH  
A *MASSIVE LION-BIRD* WHO  
ATTACKED FIRST, AND WAS  
*STILL* ATTACKING.





Next Story Comic - Wednesday Sep 7th  
Next EGSNP (after Saturday) - Thursday Sep 8th





IT'S... NOT JUST THAT I USED THE VILLAIN FORM.

IT'S THAT PART OF ME WANTED TO USE IT *BEFORE* THERE WAS A PROBLEM.



WE WERE MEETING FOR A FRIENDLY CHAT BUT I WAS AFRAID OF NOT BEING ABLE TO PROTECT ANYONE.

...AND OF SOMEONE GETTING HURT WHILE PROTECTING ME

THE *HUGE* COINCIDENCE THAT SOMETHING *ACTUALLY* HAPPENED, AND THE FORM WAS *USEFUL*, DOESN'T JUSTIFY HOW I FELT



BUT YOU HAD A SCARY EXPERIENCE WITH TARA. SO BEING AFRAID WAS UNDERSTANDABLE!

AND USING THE VILLAIN FORM TURNED OUT TO BE THE RIGHT THING TO DO UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, RIGHT?

SO IT WAS *GOOD!*

RIGHT, TEDD?



NO IT WAS BAD.

**TEDD?!**



THERE WEREN'T ANY GOOD OPTIONS.

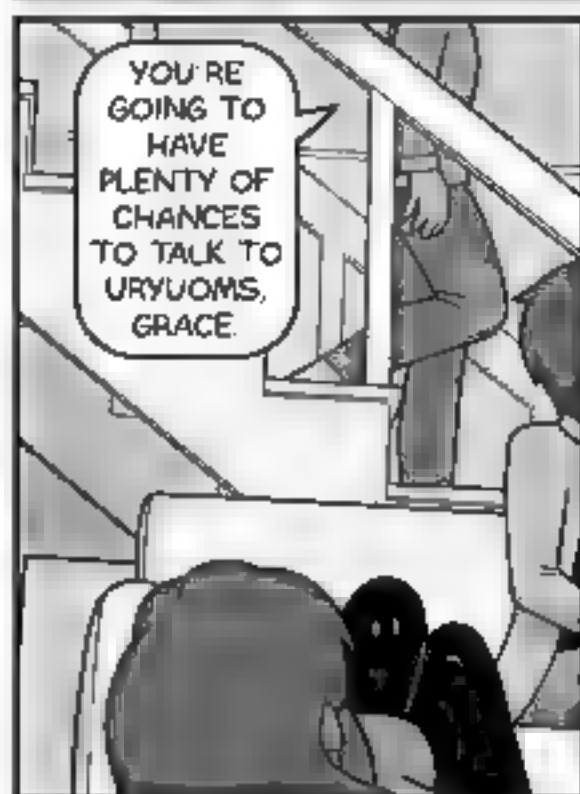
THE VILLAIN FORM WAS A BAD OPTION.

BUT IT WAS ALSO THE *RIGHT CHOICE*



WE'LL LEARN FROM TONIGHT, AND FIGURE OUT BETTER OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

IN THE MEANTIME DON'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF

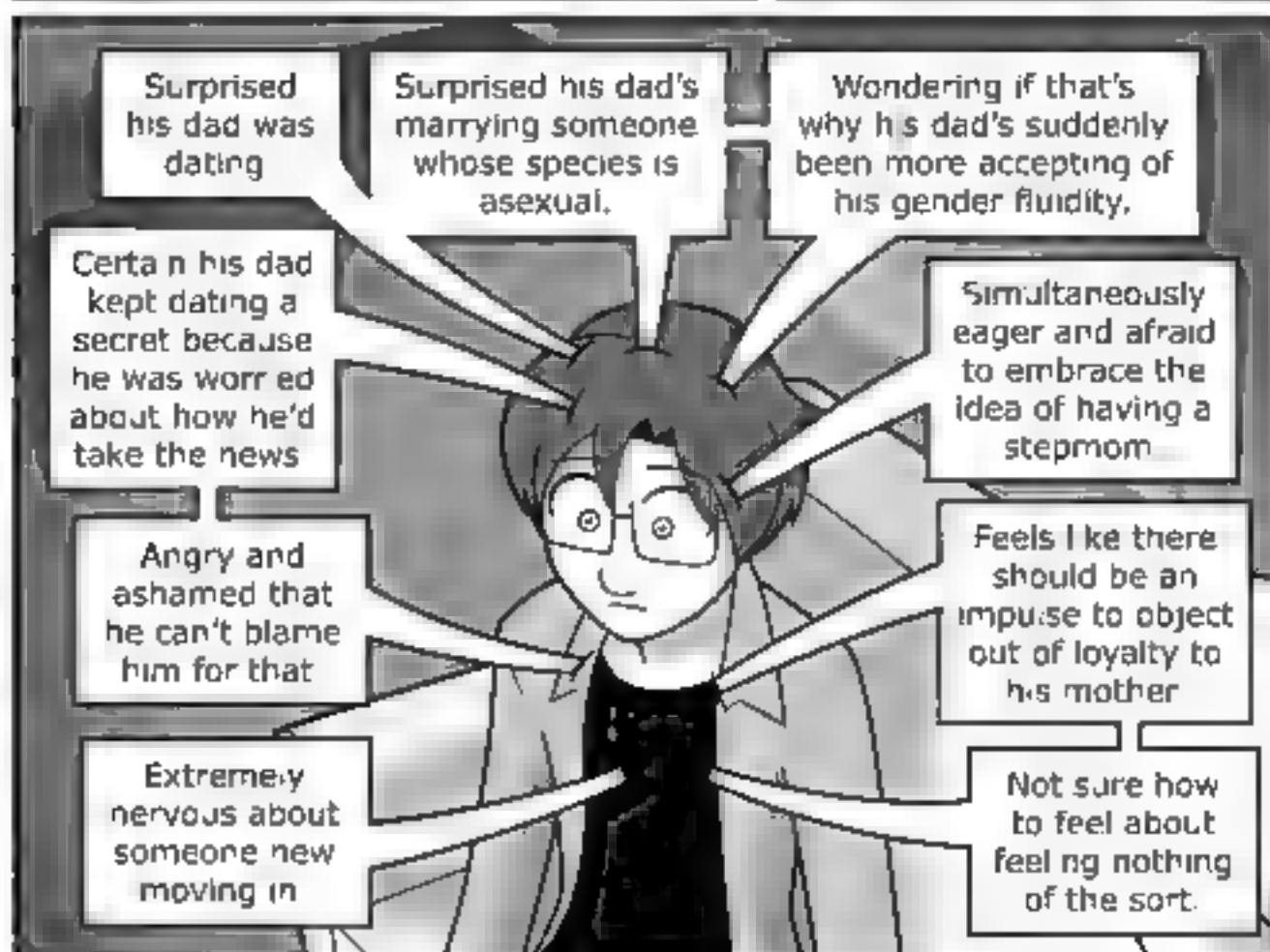


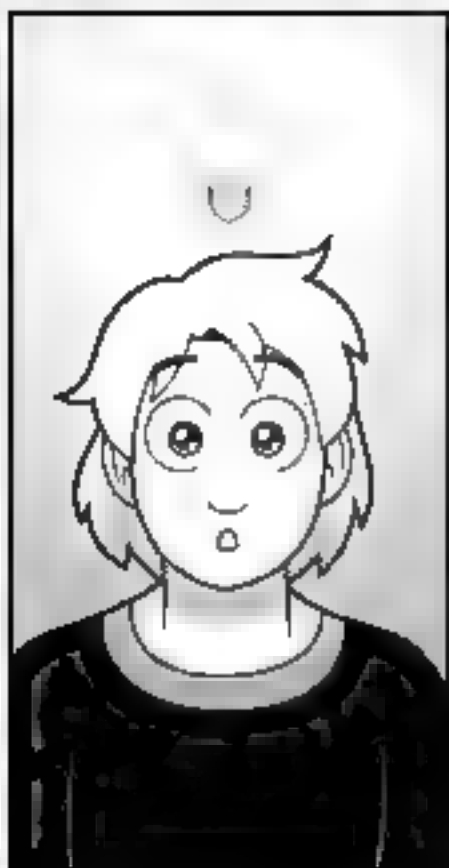
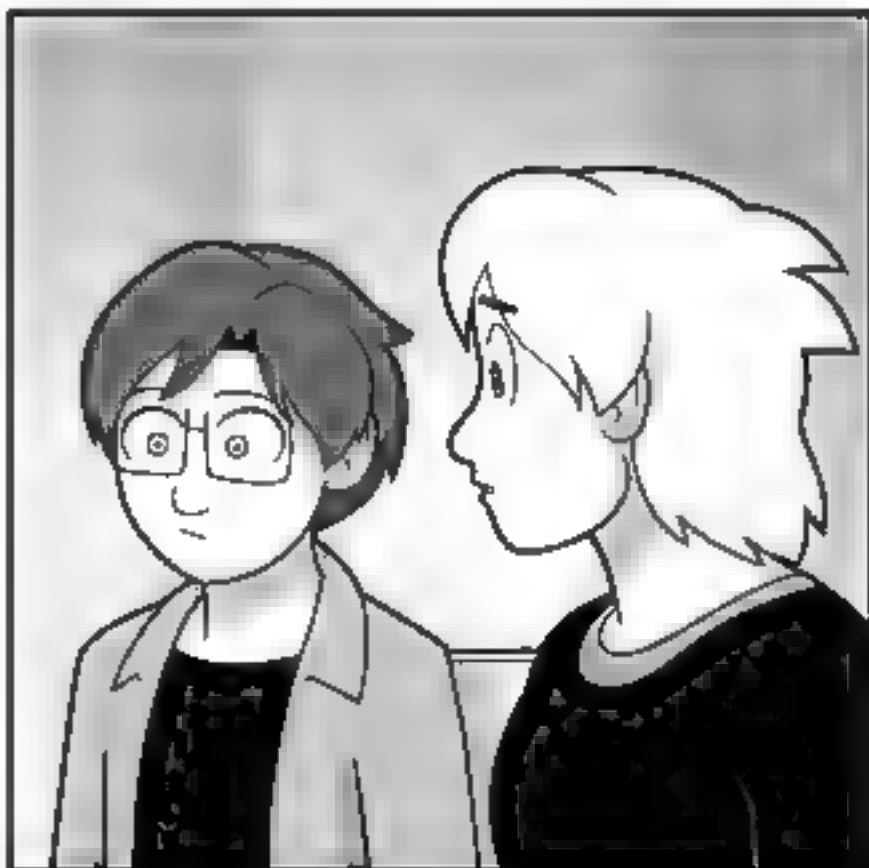


**CONGRATULATIONS!**



WHAT DO YOU THINK?









IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BEST IF  
YOU'D INTRODUCED US FIRST...



BUT I CAN COMPLETELY  
UNDERSTAND YOUR ACTING  
ON IMPULSE THERE



THANK  
YOU, I...

WAIT

YOU HAVEN'T DONE  
THAT HAVE YOU?



**IMPULSE HUG!**



**WORD  
PUNNING!**



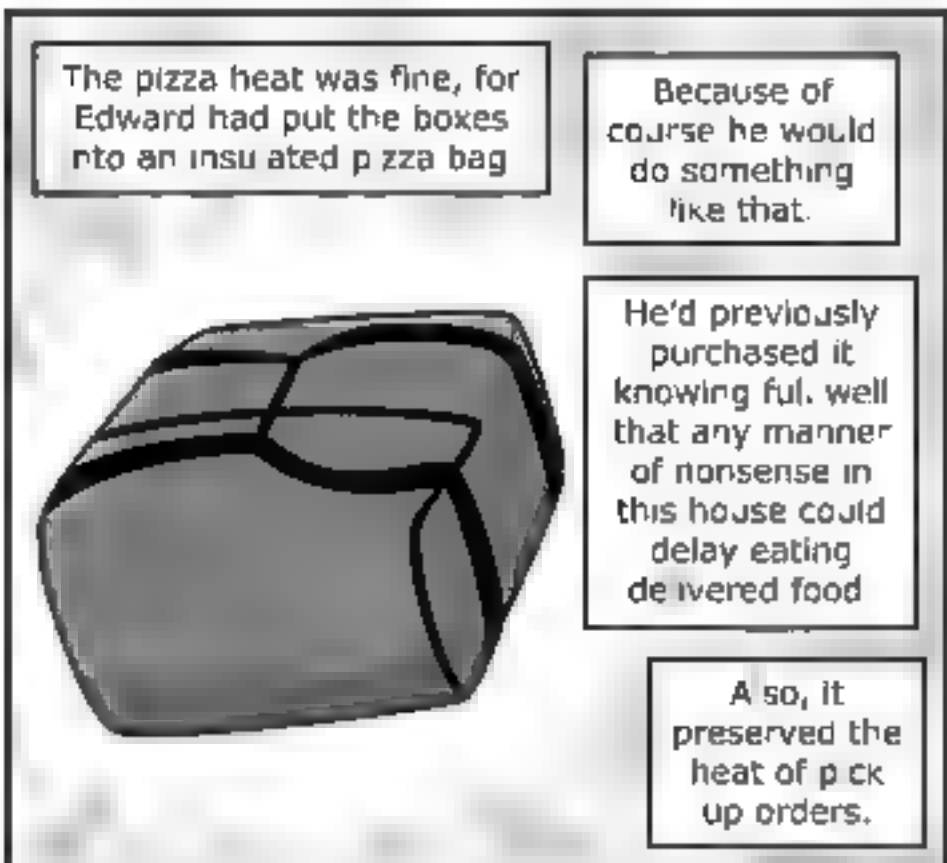
SERIOUSLY

YOU TWO  
AREN'T  
ENGAGED,  
RIGHT?



OH, RIGHT UM,  
THE WHOLE REASON  
I CAME DOWN HERE  
IS BECAUSE THE  
PIZZA'S HERE

**GASP!**  
**PRECIOUS  
PIZZA HEAT!**



The pizza heat was fine, for  
Edward had put the boxes  
into an insulated pizza bag

Because of  
course he would  
do something  
like that.

He'd previously  
purchased it  
knowing full well  
that any manner  
of nonsense in  
this house could  
delay eating  
delivered food

Also, it  
preserved the  
heat of pickup  
orders.



This did not mean there weren't  
other problems to overcome

IT'S GOING TO BE A PAIN TO EAT  
WITH YOUR HANDS SORE, ISN'T IT



HERE LET ME  
HELP YOU.



**NOM**



THEY'RE NOT  
ENGAGED RIGHT?

After eating pizza...

I'VE MADE A WAND WITH A HAIR COLOR SPELL THAT MATCHES YOUR HAIR'S ACTUAL COLOR.

IT HAS STORED MAGIC IN IT, SO IT DOESN'T REQUIRE MAGIC FROM YOU TO USE IT

THIS IS IMPORTANT, BECAUSE EVEN WHEN BURNT OUT, YOU RECOVER MAGIC POWER OVER TIME.

WHEN YOU USE YOUR OWN POWER TO CAST A SPELL WITH A WAND WHILE BURNT OUT WEIRD THINGS CAN HAPPEN.

OR, AT LEAST, THAT HAPPENED WITH NANASE.

SO IT'S IMPORTANT YOU USE THIS WAND, AND NOT THE HAIR COLOR WATCH I MADE FOR ELLEN.

THE HEALING SPELL I'M ABOUT TO USE EFFECTIVELY ACCELERATES YOUR OWN HEALING.

THERE MIGHT BE MILD DISCOMFORT WHERE INJURED, AND IT WILL BE TIRING EVEN AFTER PIZZA

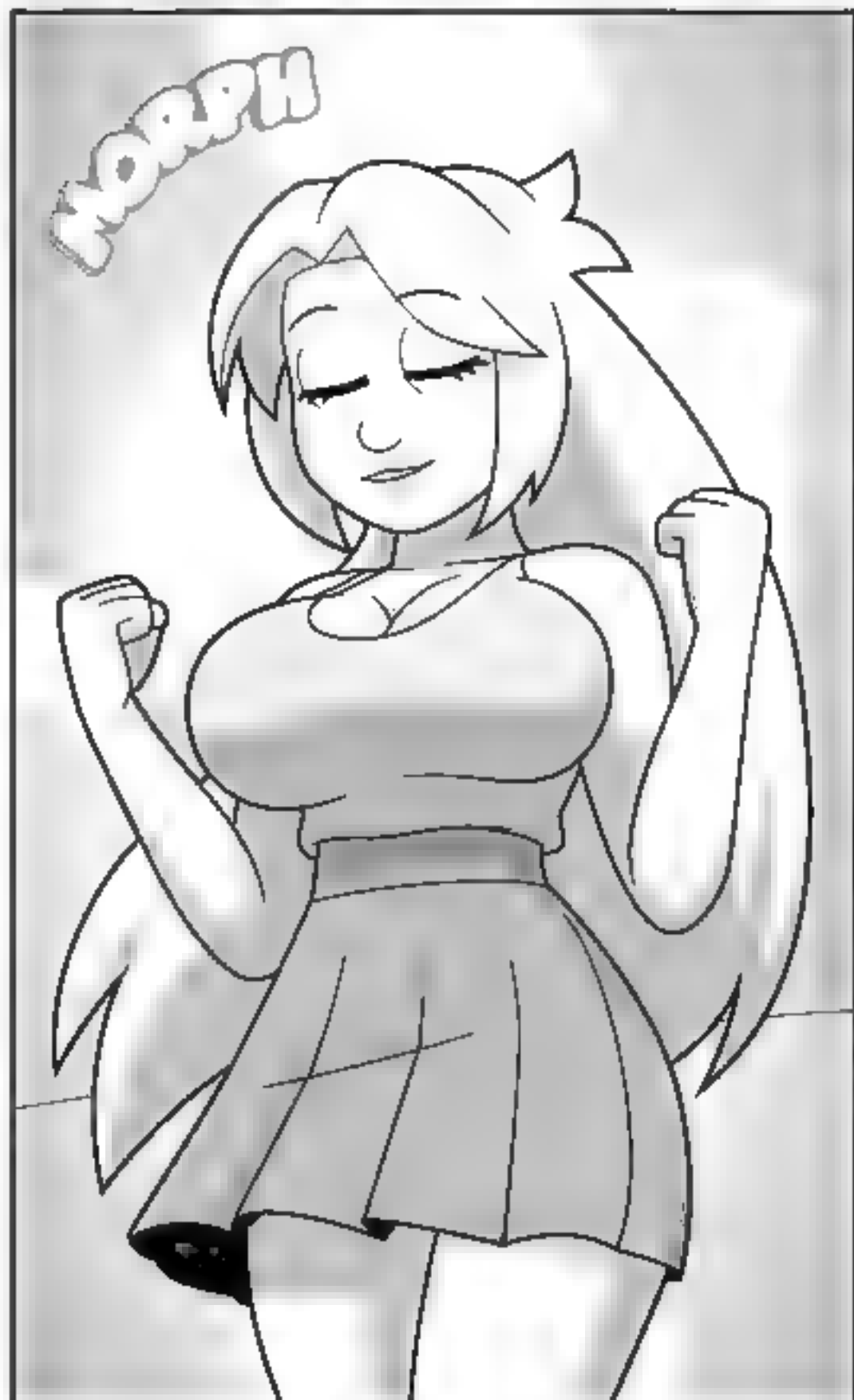
YOU SHOULD EAT A BROWNIE AFTER IT'S DONE. ARE YOU READY?

UM... SURE GO AHEAD.

TEDD, LOOK WITH SEER SIGHT

EH?!

ZA?



THWUMP





Elliot was fine, but criticized severely for standing up and using magic right after being healed by a spell that predictably results in fatigue.



No one was more critical of Elliot in this moment than Elliot, who was very much aware that they'd just recklessly endangered their own wellbeing right in front of Tedd.

PATHETIC.



On the plus side, Elliot's hands felt a lot better

And the brownie was good



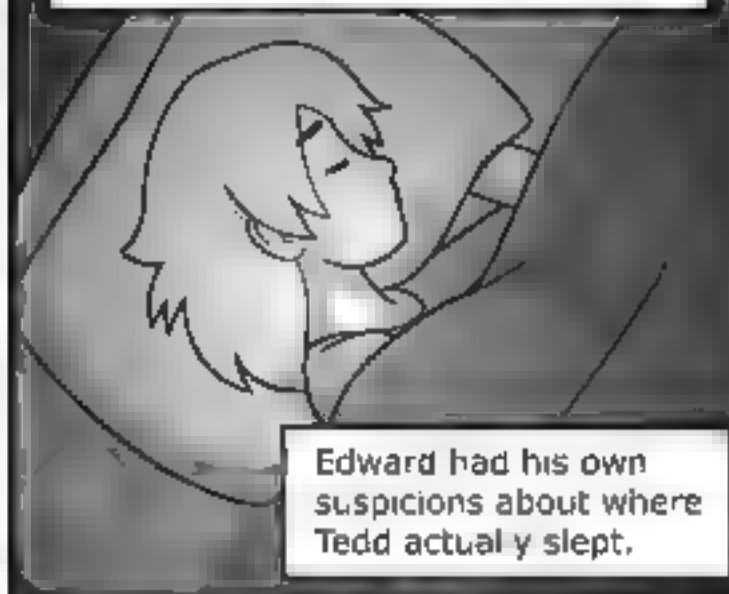
Tedd was pretty sure he'd be able to copy the healing spell into wands after observing it used more, but the spell felt notably different from what Tedd was used to



He wasn't sure if this was because the spell was from another system of magic, a type of spell he wasn't used to, or both.

Elliot, exhausted, wound up spending the night, and was offered Tedd's bed to sleep in. He accepted

Tedd allegedly slept alone on a sofa



Edward had his own suspicions about where Tedd actually slept.

Edward was quick to write up a report of the incident with the griffins, which Arthur read on Monday. This report minimized details about Grace's power, and left out her preventing "villain" Elliot from killing Lord Tyrantslayer



Arthur saw through this.



ELLIOT  
AND  
GRACE

I WANT  
THEM.

ONLY THOSE OF URYVOM DESCENT COULD  
MAKE THIS JOURNEY ANYONE VULNERABLE  
TO LIE DETECTION HAD TO BE EXCLUDED.

THIS SEVERELY LIMITS OUR OPTIONS  
FOR CONFIRMING WHO DOES, OR DOES  
NOT, HAVE AN AURA OF ROYALTY

THE ONLY CONFIRMATION WE CAN GET  
IS THROUGH PEOPLE'S DREAMS, AND  
WE'RE LUCKY TO EVEN HAVE THAT

WITHOUT THE ABILITIES ONE OF US  
INHERITED, WE WOULD HAVE NOTHING.

BUT THE ROYALTY ON  
THIS SIDE OF THE WORLD  
ARE NOT AS WELL HIDDEN  
AS ONE MIGHT EXPECT.

THEY ARE  
SIMPLY NOT  
KNOWN FOR  
WHAT THEY  
ARE.



ANYONE WITH  
THE KNOWLEDGE,  
STRENGTH, AND  
HERITAGE TO HAVE  
A ROYAL AURA WILL  
BE IN A POSITION  
OF POWER.

ROYALTY  
NOT IN  
TITLE, BUT  
IN SOCIAL  
STATUS AND  
WEALTH

TYRANTS WHO  
CONTROL FROM  
THE SHADOWS.  
ARGUABLY WORSE  
THAN THE ROYALTY  
ON OUR SIDE.

THAT IS HOW  
WE CAN FIND  
THEM. BY  
INVESTIGATING  
THE RICH AND  
POWERFUL

MADE ALL  
THE EASIER  
BY THEM  
NOT OPENLY  
RULING ON  
THIS SIDE.



AND EVEN IF WE  
DO NOT FIND A  
TYRANT WITH AN  
AURA OF ROYALTY  
SO EASILY.

.. WE MIGHT FIND  
SOMEONE WITH AN  
ABILITY WE CAN USE  
TO FIND THEM.

WHATEVER PATH  
LIES AHEAD, IT  
ENDS WITH ME  
TAKING AN AURA  
OF ROYALTY..

AND BECOMING  
A VOICE FOR MY  
PEOPLE THAT  
CANNOT BE  
IGNORED.

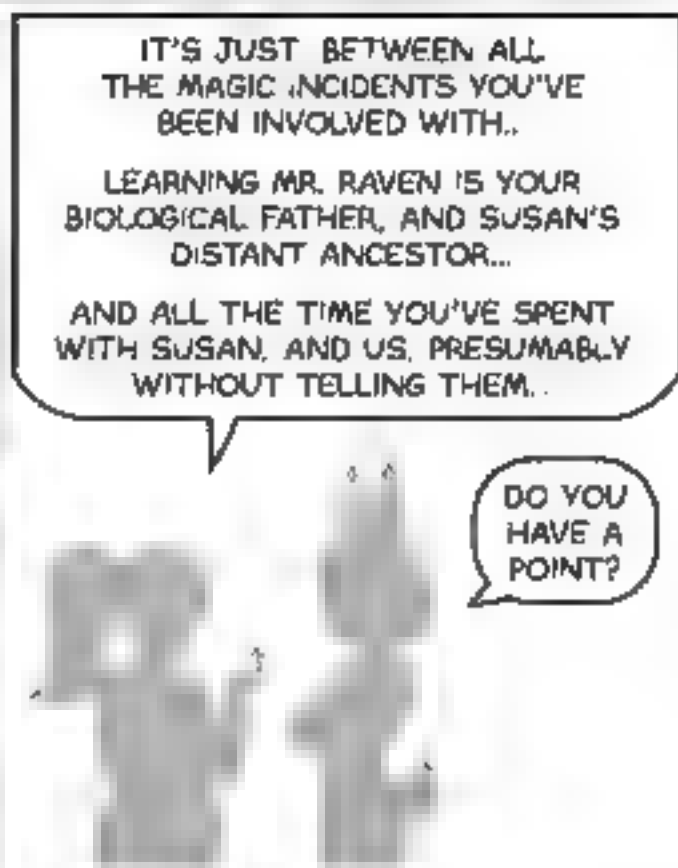


# Balance **THE END**

Story comics will return Weds, October 19th  
(EGSNP comics still Tues-Thurs-Saturday)

# Brother

Over a week ago, the party with Ashley.







WELL, LUCY, IT TURNS OUT OUR JUNIOR YEAR HISTORY TEACHER IS MY BIOLOGICAL FATHER AND A REALLY LONG-LIVED HALF-IMMORTAL AND I'M WORRIED ABOUT RUNNING INTO HIM.

OH! I SEE!



NO.



SERIOUSLY, WHAT'S GOING ON?

IS AN EX BOYFRIEND GIVING YOU TROUBLE?

SHUDDER



IS THAT A YES?

NO NO NO

I'M JUST UM.



PRACTICING MY STEALTH.



PRACTICING YOUR STEALTH.



YEAH, I... USED TO SNEAK AROUND A LOT

I DON'T REALLY NEED TO NOW BUT IT'S A SKILL SO...

Y'KNOW

SNEAK PRACTICE



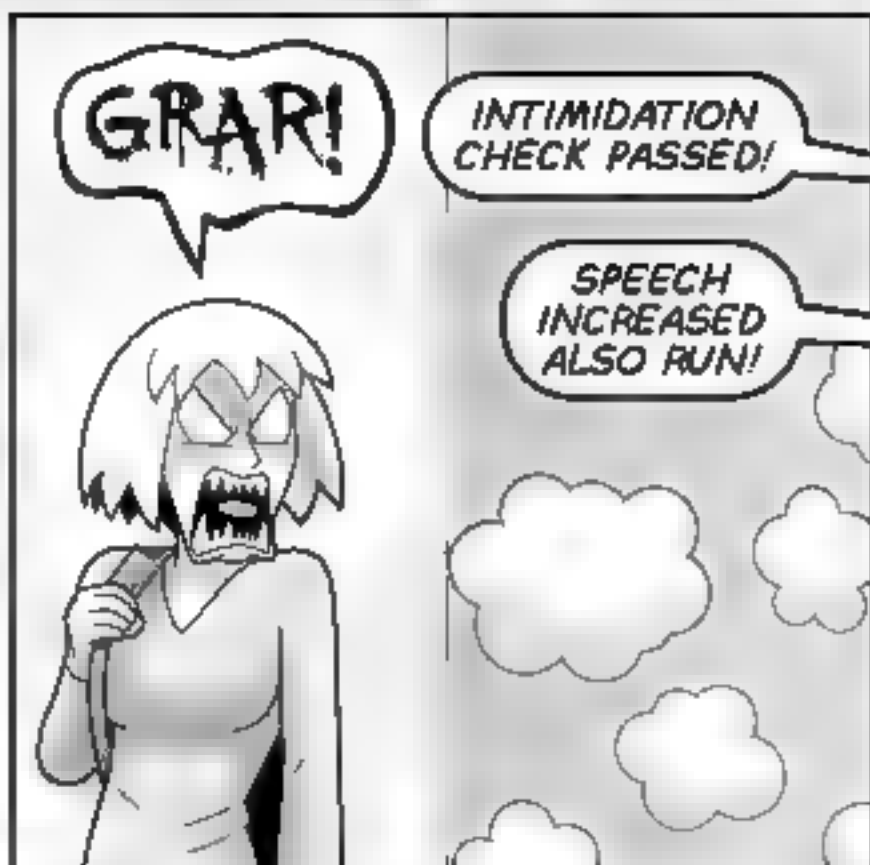
NOTHING THERE NOW

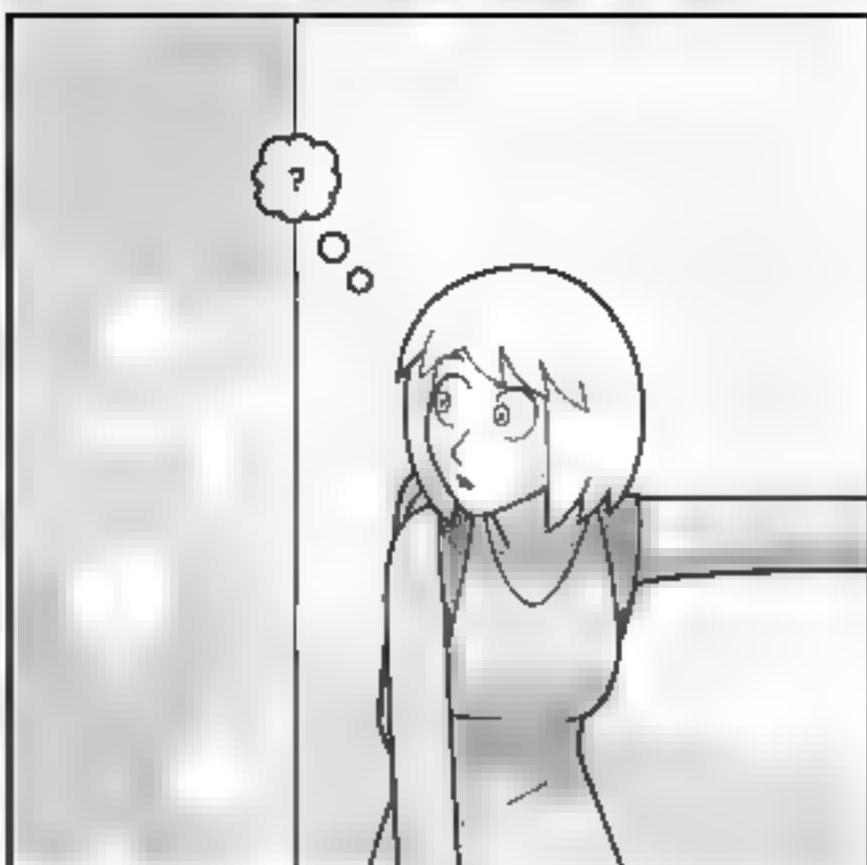
SNICKER

MUST'VE BEEN THE WIND

HEH HEH HEH









CALM DOWN. YOU AND LUCY GO WAY BACK SHE'S NOT GOING TO LEAVE YOU *THAT* EASILY

PLUS, RAVEN BEING MY BIOLOGICAL FATHER DOESN'T JUST AFFECT *ME*

RAVEN FOUND OUT HE HAS A DAUGHTER HE D.D.N'T KNOW ABOUT

THAT'S A LOT TO PROCESS AND HE'S PROBABLY GOING TO WANT TO GET TO KNOW ME



WHICH MEANS HE'LL WANT TO FIGURE OUT A MUNDANE EXPLANATION HE CAN USE TO TELL PEOPLE HOW HE FOUND OUT ABOUT ME!

AND IF RAVEN TAKES FULL CREDIT FOR *HIM* FINDING ME, I COULD EVEN EXPLAIN HIM TO MY FAMILY WITHOUT MAKING THEM WORRY THAT I WASN'T HAPPY WITH THEM!

TOGETHER. WE COULD GET THINGS TO A POINT WHERE THE *ONLY* SECRETS I'M KEEPING ARE ABOUT *MAGIC*!

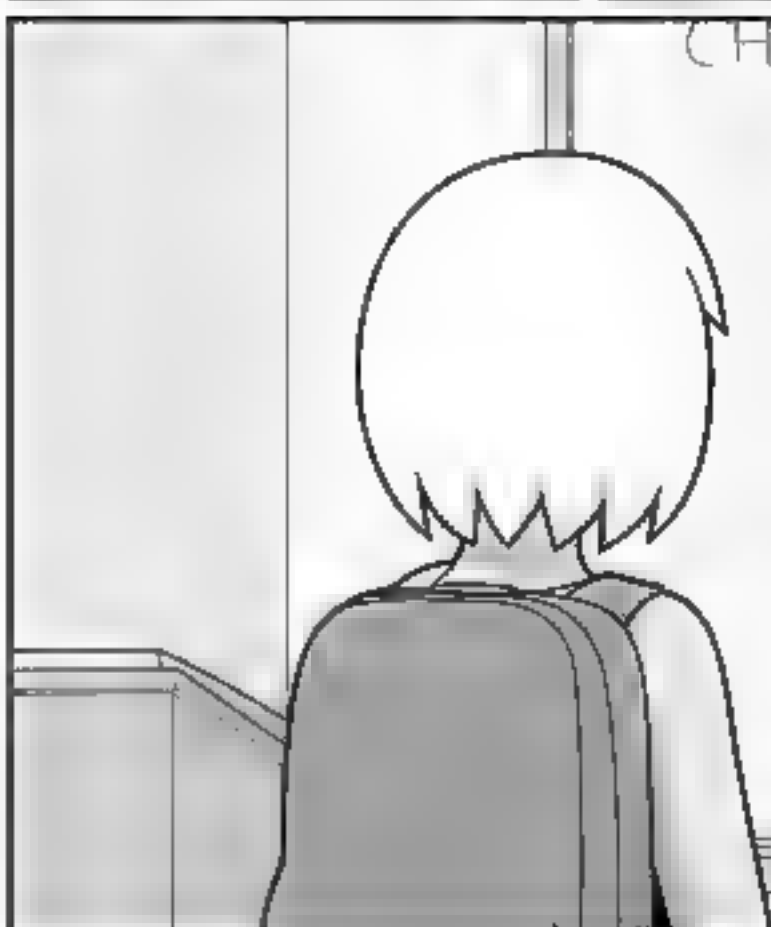


AN EXPLANATION I CAN TELL *LUCY*, AND CLEAR EVERYTHING UP!



THIS IS GOING TO BE AWKWARD AS HELL, BUT IT'S GOING TO *FIX EVERYTHING*!

## CHAPTER 12



MR. RAVEN?

HE RETIRED.

HE RETIRED?!

WHEN?!



A-A  
COUPLE  
WEEKS  
AGO?

I DON'T KNOW WHY HE  
RETIRED IN THE MIDDLE OF  
THE YEAR, BUT I'M SURE HE  
HAD A GOOD REASON?



IT'S ALSO MY  
UNDERSTANDING THAT  
HE'LL HUNT ME DOWN  
IF I DON'T LIVE UP TO  
HIS STANDARDS OF  
TEACHING HISTORY

BUT THAT HAD TO  
BE A JOKE RIGHT?



RRRAAUUGH!



WAIT!

DO YOU  
THINK THAT  
WASN'T A  
JOKE?!

GRRR

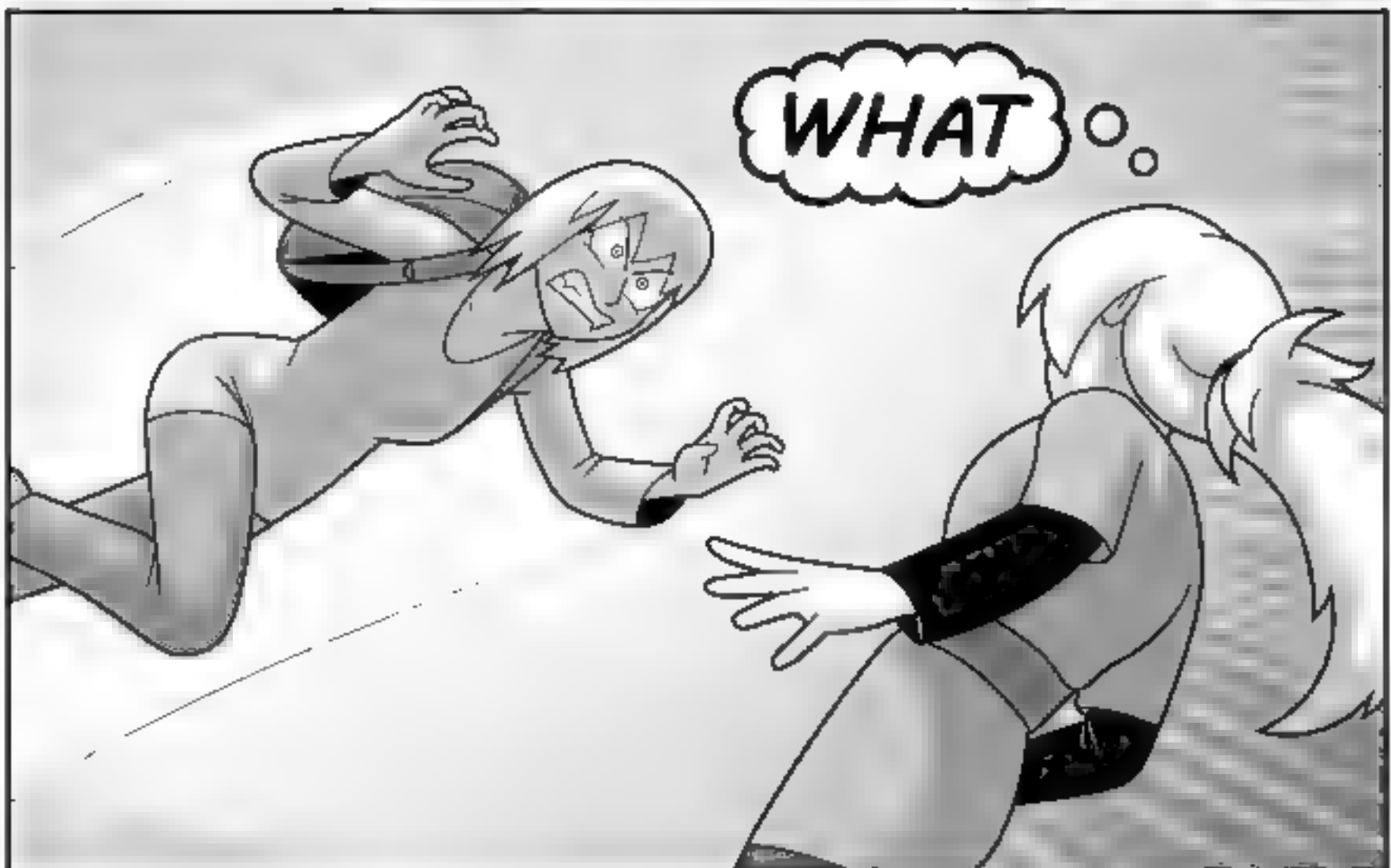
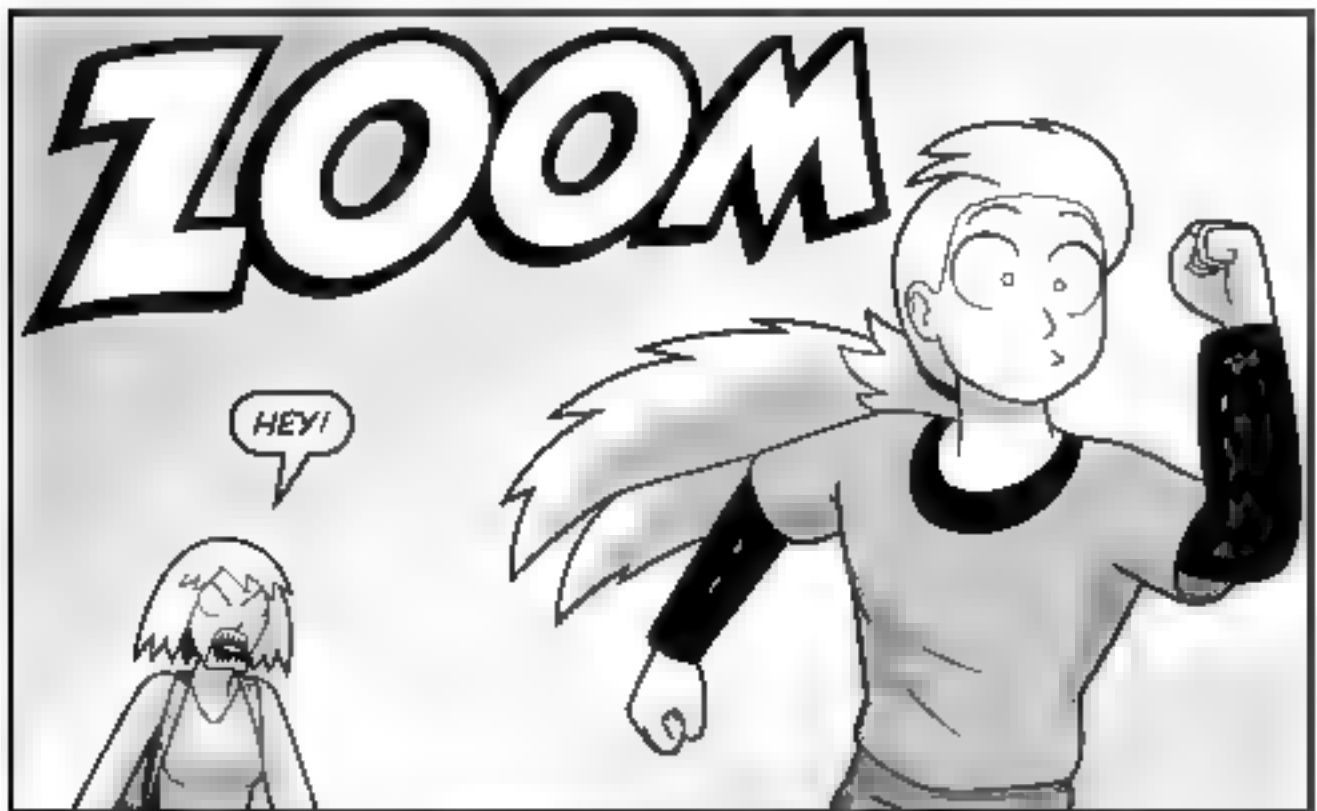


WHOOSH



STALKER!







TH  
W  
U  
M  
P



DID I JUST SEE



..WHAT  
I THINK I  
SAW?



WHY WERE YOU  
FOLLOWING ME?

I HEARD YOU  
GROWL AT  
PEOPLE IT WAS  
CONCERNING. I  
WANTED TO  
KNOW IF YOU  
WERE OKAY



WHAT'S THAT  
MATTER TO YOU?

I  
DON'T  
KNOW  
YOU



I AM NOAH RAVEN, MR.  
RAVEN'S ADOPTED SON.

YOUR BROTHER



EH?





I WAS TRYING TO FIND YOU, AND SAW YOU ON TOP OF HIM! IS HE THE EX YOU'VE BEEN AVOIDING?!

SHUDDER

BLUSH

DOES SHUDDERING MEAN YES?!



NO, NO HE'S NOT AN EX, HE'S...

HE'S...



HE'S WHAT?

HOW DO I EXPLAIN THIS?!



YOU THINK YOU ARE PROTECTING HER.

PROTECTING YOURSELF



WHAT ARE YOU...



THE GLOWING WOMAN AT THE MALL TOLD DIANE WHO HER FATHER IS.

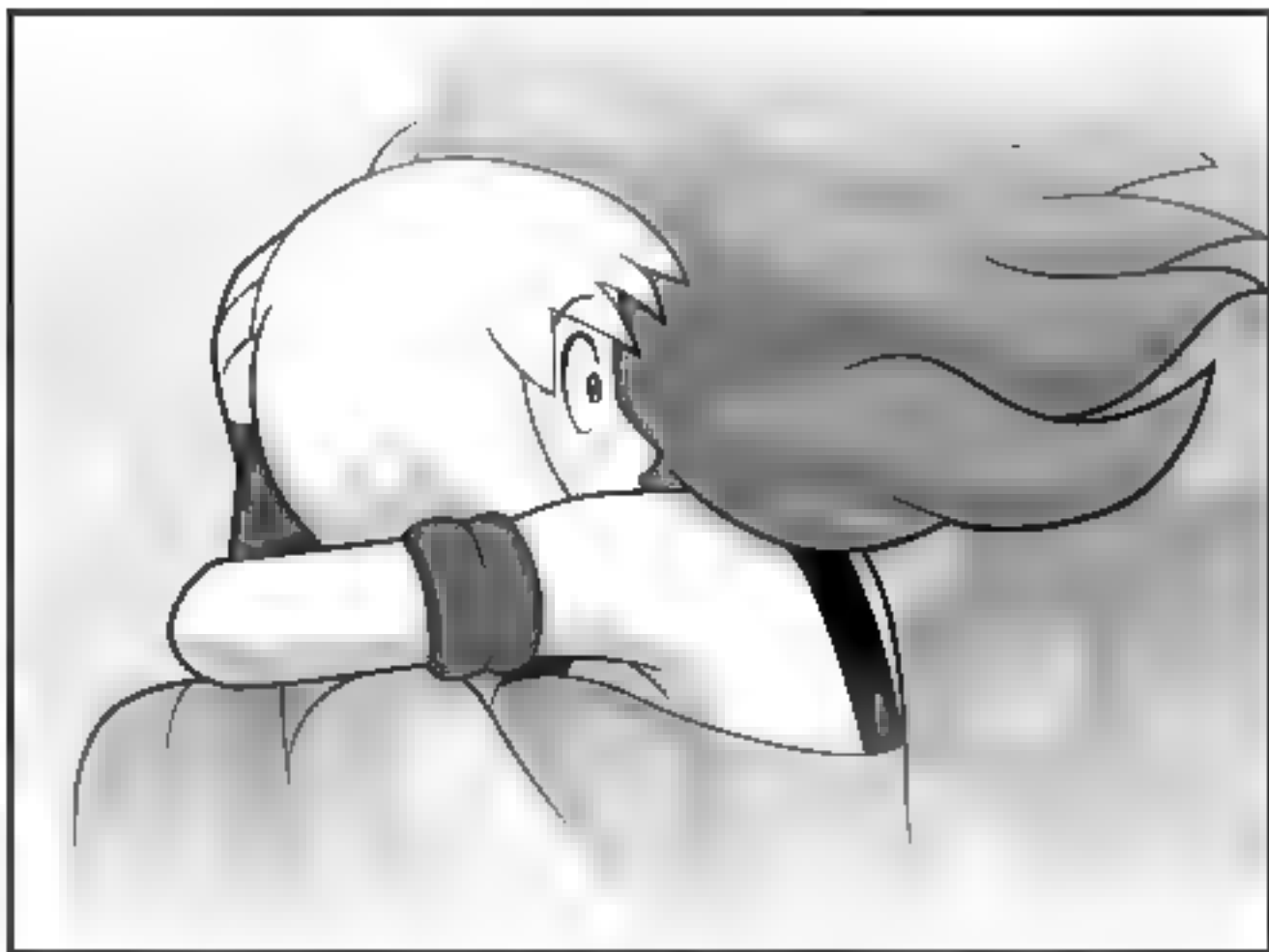


HE WAS A TEACHER HERE.



SHE HAS BEEN AVOIDING HIM.





I'M  
SORRY,  
DIANE.

I KNEW SOMETHING WAS  
WRONG. AND I DIDN'T UNDER-  
STAND WHY YOU WOULDN'T  
TELL ME ANYTHING

I SHOULD'VE  
GIVEN YOU  
MORE SPACE.



NO NO,  
I'M SORRY I  
SHOULD'VE  
SAID MORE  
THAN. UM.

LIES. LOTS  
AND LOTS OF  
OBVIOUS LIES.



I-I'M  
SURPRISED  
YOU BELIEVED  
HIM SO  
QUICKLY!

YOUR  
REACTION  
SAID IT ALL.  
HE'S YOUR  
BROTHER?



ADOPTED BROTHER SORT OF  
HE... HE WAS ADOPTED BY..

MR RAVEN.

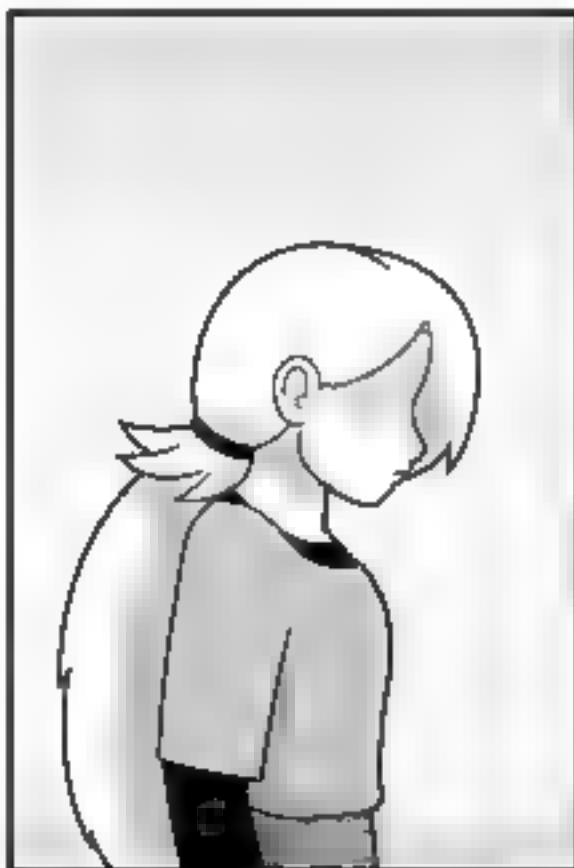
YOUR FATHER'S THAT  
TEACHER WHO LEFT  
OUT OF NOWHERE A  
COUPLE WEEKS AGO?



AM I THE ONLY  
PERSON WHO DIDN'T  
KNOW HE'D LEFT?!

MAYBE?





EVERYONE  
MAKES FUN  
OF ME! THEY  
CALL ME A  
GIRL!

AN ASSUMPTION OF A GENDER PRESENTATION  
BINARY IS A COMMON FLAW AMONG HUMANS, AS  
ARE ASSUMPTIONS OF DICHOTOMY IN GENERAL.

YOU ARE YOU, AND YOU ARE GOOD!

IT IS THEIR  
SIMPLISTIC  
PERCEPTION  
THAT IS THE  
PROBLEM!



THE PROBLEM IS  
THEY THINK THESE  
ARE A PONYTAIL!

CAN'T I JUST SAY  
WHAT THEY ARE?



THEN I COULD TELL  
THEM ABOUT SENSING  
THEM, AND WHY I  
DON'T LIKE CROWDS,  
AND HOW...

LOUD  
EVERYTHING  
IS!



I KNOW THIS IS  
DIFFICULT, NOAH,  
BUT IT IS VERY  
VERY IMPORTANT  
EVERYONE  
BELIEVE YOUR  
ANTENNAE ARE  
A PONYTAIL.

FOR NOW,  
THIS SECRET  
PROTECTS  
YOU

IT  
PROTECTS  
US!



BUT IT WON'T BE NECESSARY  
FOREVER. THE DAY THAT WAS  
FORETOLD WILL COME.

WE'RE MAKING SURE OF IT

WE WILL ALL BE LIBERATED  
BY THE MASTER OF FIRE



NOAH.

IF TELLING LUCY  
THAT STUFF WAS  
BECAUSE OF HIS  
OWN ISSUES...

...AND BASED ON  
"I HAVE FREED  
YOU BOTH." I'M  
GUESSING IT WAS...

...HE'S BEEN HURT BY  
SECRETS BEFORE

GIVEN THAT HE'S THE ADOPTED  
SON OF A MAGIC HALF-IMMORTAL,  
THERE'S A WHOLE MESS OF  
POSSIBILITIES THERE.

AND HIS. I  
GUESS OUR  
GRANDMOTHER  
SORT OF... DIED  
RECENTLY

RIGHT IN  
FRONT OF MR.  
RAVEN'S EYES...

THEN SHORTLY AFTER THAT, MR. RAVEN  
LEFT, AND NOAH PROMISED NOT TO TALK  
ABOUT IT WITH ANYONE BUT ME, AND ONLY  
IF I WAS LOOKING FOR MR. RAVEN. SO...

HAS NOAH HAD  
NO ONE TO TALK  
TO ABOUT SERIOUS  
STUFF FOR A  
COUPLE WEEKS?

IS HE LIV NG ALL  
ALONE RIGHT NOW?  
IS HE EVEN OLD  
ENOUGH FOR THAT?

**WHAT  
THE HELL  
BIO-DAD?!**

I KNOW YOU  
LOST YOUR MOM  
AND ARE PROBABLY  
DEALING WITH ALL  
SORTS OF STUFF

...BUT YOU  
JUST DITCH  
YOUR SON,  
AND YOU DON'T  
TALK TO YOUR  
DAUGHTER AT  
ALL BEFORE  
LEAVING  
TOWN?!

I SHOULD'VE  
GIVEN YOU  
MORE SPACE

**OKAY! YEAH! SPACE WAS GOOD TO  
START WITH! I NEEDED SPACE!**

**BUT  
YOU SAY  
SOMETHING  
BEFORE  
LEAVING  
TOWN!**

IT'S IMPORTANT TO  
TALK TO NOAH AGAIN.  
I NEED TO ASK ABOUT  
RAVEN, MAKE SURE  
HE'S OKAY—

**YELL AT  
HIM FOR  
BLABBING!**

HE HAD NO  
BUSINESS  
TELLING LUCY  
ANYTHING!

HE KNOWS  
HOW TO COOK.  
RIGHT? HE'S  
EATING WELL?

**OF COURSE  
HE'S EATING  
WELL! HE RAN  
LIKE A WEASEL-  
CHICKEN!**

WHICH DON'T  
EXIST, BUT IF  
THEY DID, THEY'D  
BE FAST!

**ANGER ANGER ANGER  
HANG ON TO ANGER!**

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHEN YOU'LL  
SEE HIM AGAIN, AND YOU WANT TO BE  
**ANGRY WHEN YOU DO!**



**ARE YOU EATING WELL?!**







WE SHOULD  
TALK AT YOUR  
HOUSE AFTER  
SCHOOL.

UM... I WAS  
ACTUALLY GOING  
TO SUGGEST  
THAT, BUT...



BUT  
WHAT?

MY INTENT WAS  
TO TALK ABOUT YOU-  
KNOW-WHAT..

BUT I GET THE IMPRESSION  
YOU JUST WANT TO ASSESS  
MY LIVING SITUATION..?

I CAN DO TWO THINGS! *THREE!* UNLESS  
YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING GOOD PLANNED,  
I'M COOKING A *HEALTHY DINNER!*

I... BUT... WHY?

BECAUSE YOU'RE MY LITTLE  
BROTHER, AND I NEED TO  
MAKE SURE YOU'RE OKAY!



SHE... CARES  
ABOUT ME?

I... I CAN-  
NOT IMAGINE...

Y-YOU  
ARE MUCH  
O-OLDER.

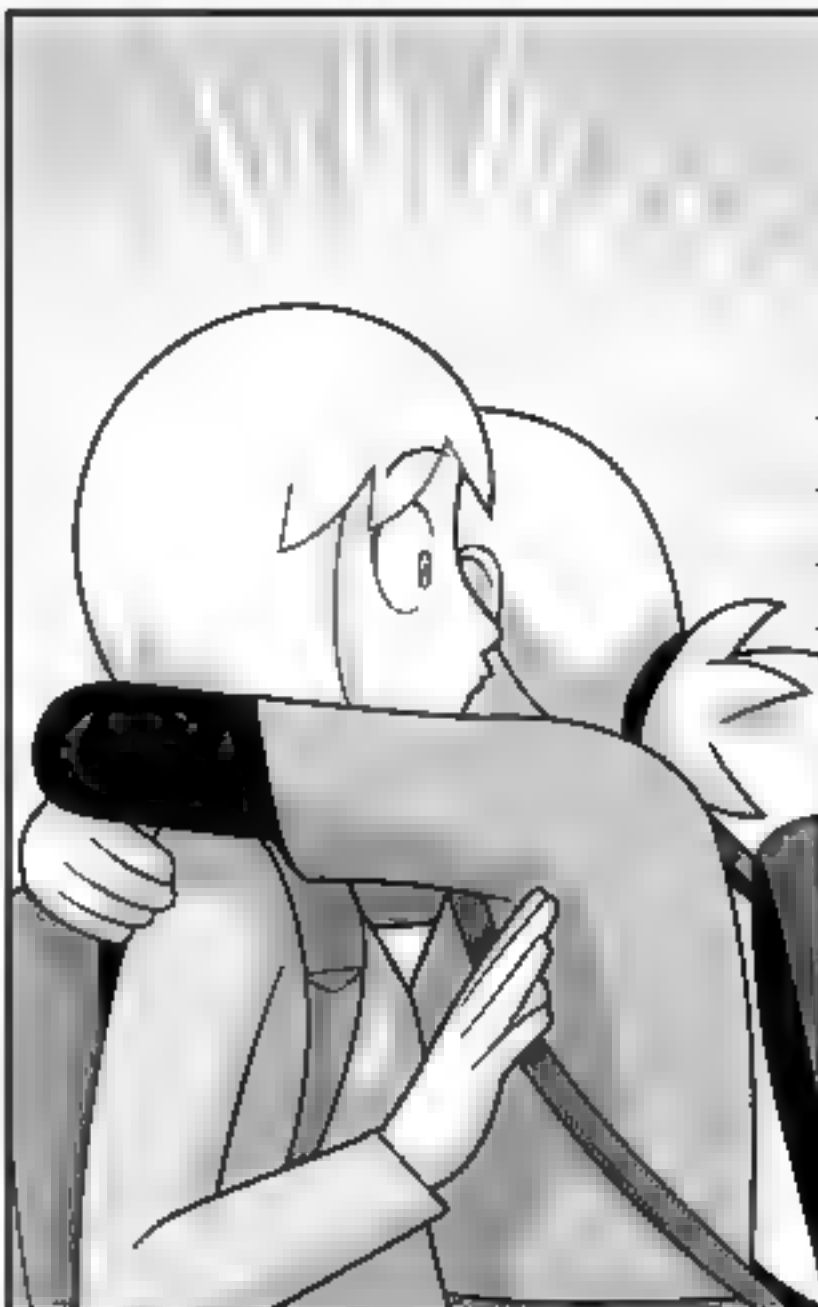
TH-THAN..



OH HELL.

I'VE BEEN  
AN OLDER  
SISTER FOR  
*FIVE*  
SECONDS,  
AND I'VE  
ALREADY  
SCREWED  
IT UP







I'M SORRY! I HAVE  
MADE YOU LATE AGAIN!

I'M PRETTY  
SURE BOTH  
TIMES ARE  
ON ME...

I WILL FIND YOU  
LATER TO GIVE YOU  
MY NUMBER!

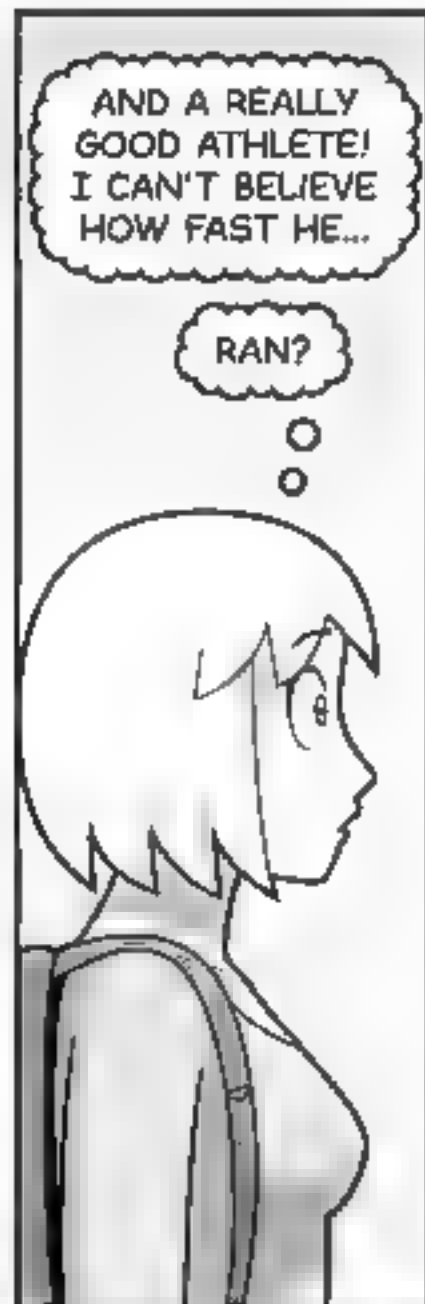
OR YOU  
WILL FIND  
ME!

ONE OF US IS SURELY  
DESTINED TO FIND THE  
OTHER AGAIN!

UH...

SURE...

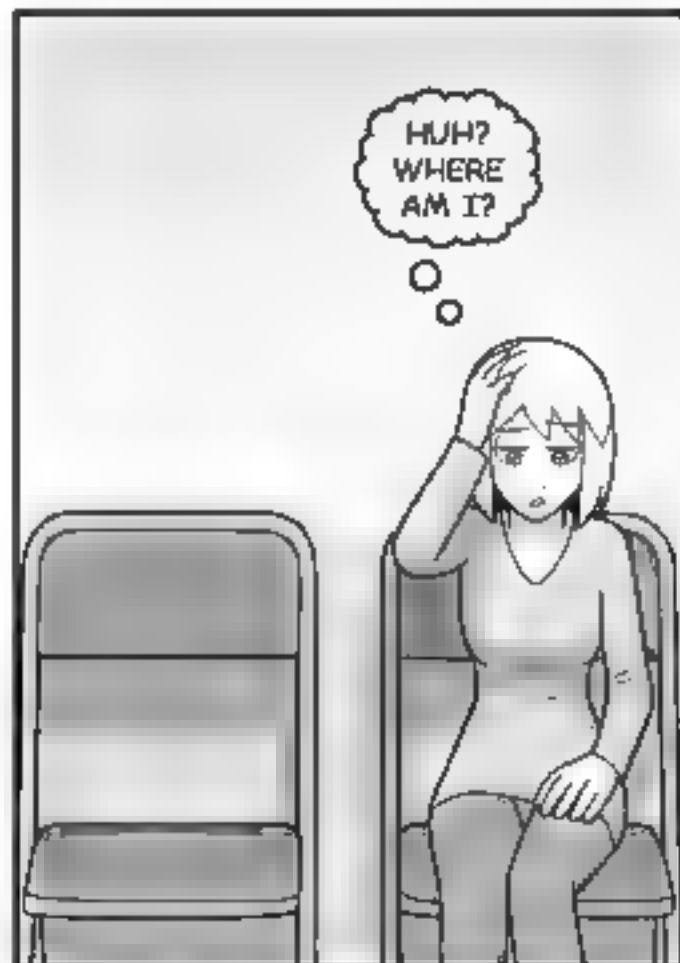
I JUST MADE  
A MAJOR  
COMMITMENT  
TO A TOTAL  
STRANGER.  
DIDN'T I





**DIANE!**

D-DON'T WORRY



HUH?  
WHERE  
AM I?



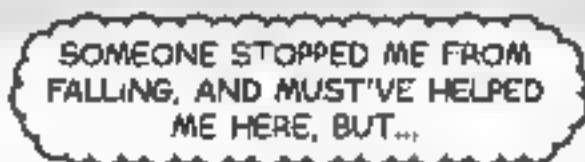
OUTSIDE  
THE NURSE'S  
OFFICE? HOW  
DID I GET ...

WAIT ...

I'VE  
GOT  
YOU



HELLO?!



SOMEONE STOPPED ME FROM  
FALLING, AND MUST'VE HELPED  
ME HERE, BUT...



HEY!



WASN'T  
THAT  
HALFWAY  
EMPTY?!

WHAT IS IT?! IS THERE  
AN EMERGENCY?!

I'M A REAL  
NURSE WITH A  
BACHELOR'S  
DEGREE!

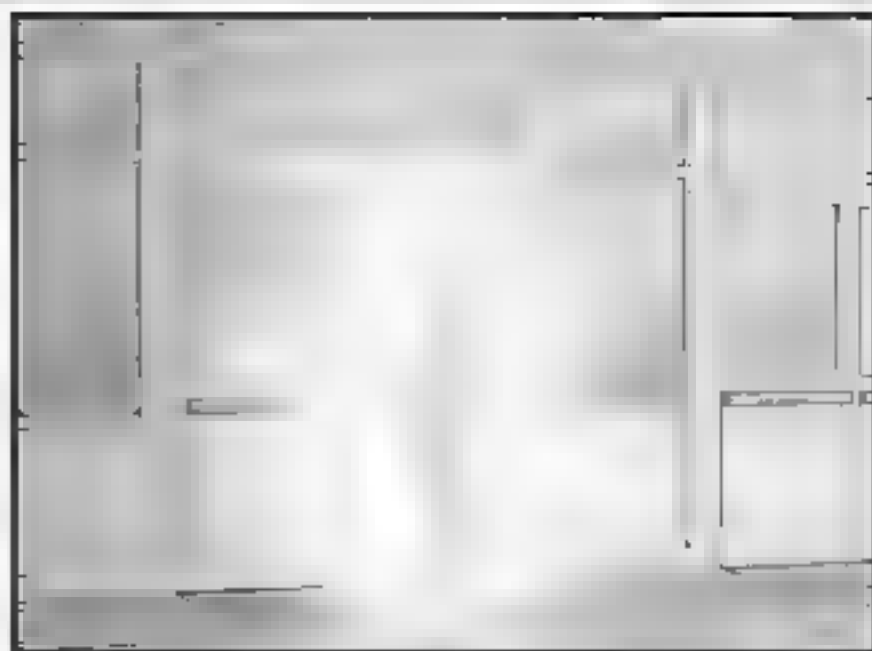
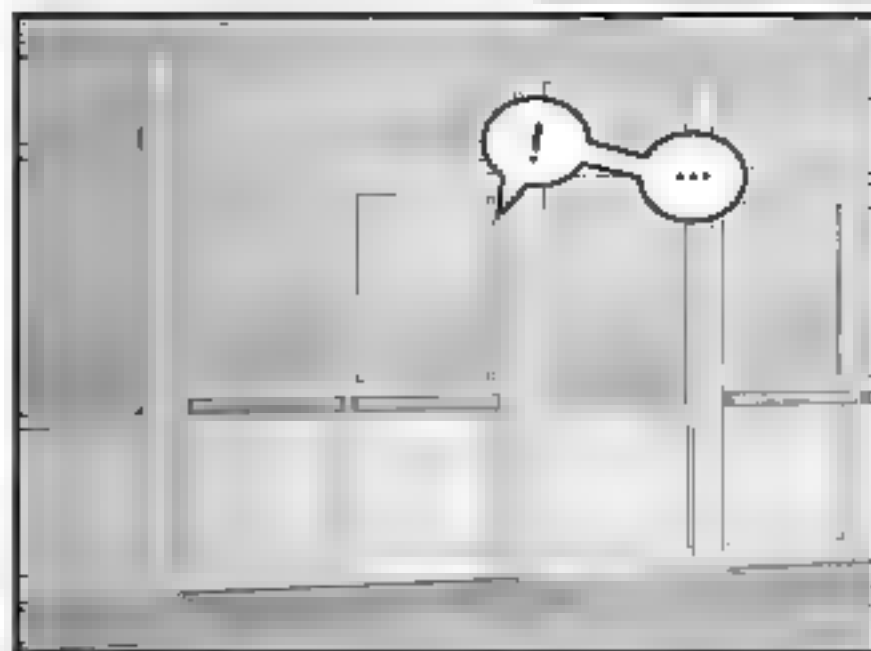
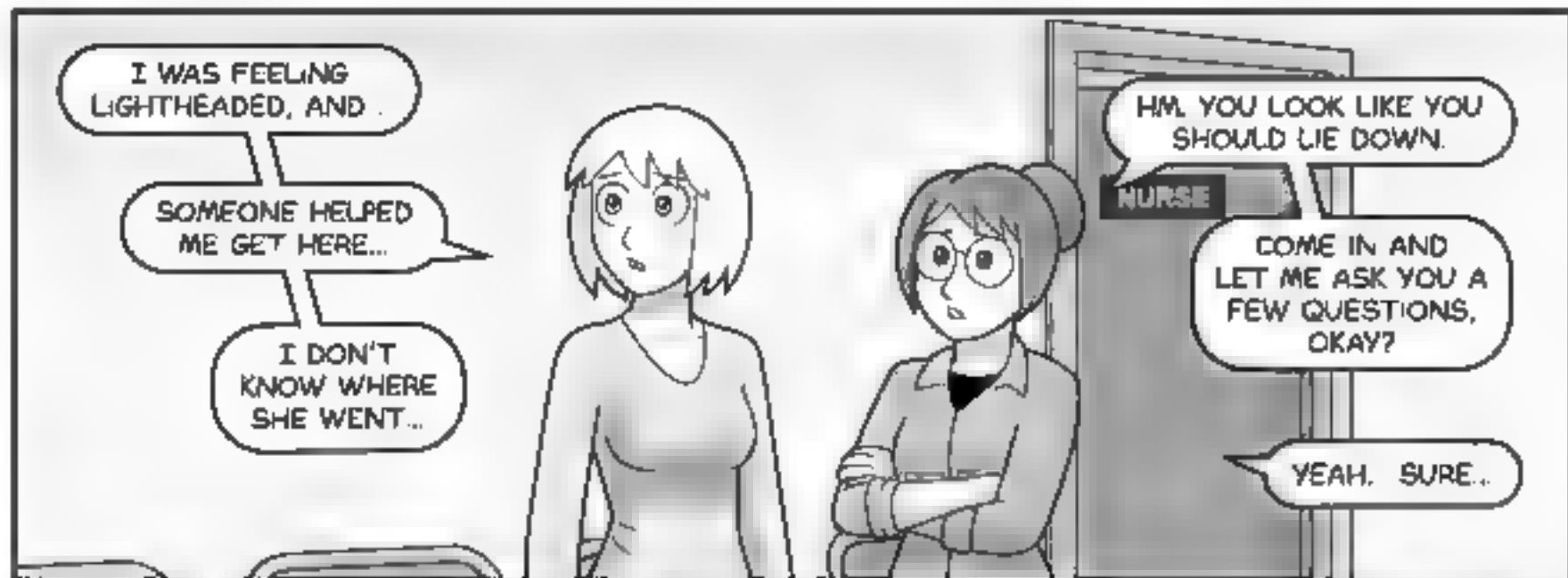
NURSE



THAT'S...  
KINDA WEIRD  
TO POINT  
OUT?

WELL, PEOPLE ASSUME  
THEY LET JUST ANYONE  
BE A SCHOOL NURSE,  
AND THEY'RE WRONG!

NOW WHAT'S GOING  
ON OUT HERE?!









# Brother **THE END**

Story comics will return Weds, Dec 28  
EGSNP as normal Thursday, then return Thurs, Dec 29

Moperville South, last year...





